BING

SUMMER 2005

No. 140

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

BING MAGAZINE (INCORPORATING BINGANG)

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY

Founded in 1936, the world's longest-running fan club - as recognised by the Guinness Book of World Records

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Articles for inclusion in the magazine should be sent to the Magazine Editor or the American Co-Editor.

Other Correspondence concerning membership, non-arrival of the magazine or other aspects of the club's affairs should either be sent to the Secretary/Treasurer or to your local representative please.

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EDITORIAL

It's always exciting to be able to look ahead and find high profile events honoring Bing and his accomplishments looming on the horizon. The Film Society of Lincoln Center's fourteen-film Bing Crosby retrospective, "What a Swell Party This Is!" to be held between July 20th and 26th at the Walter Reade Theater in New York, is one such event and will have taken place by the time you are reading this. I hope many of you will have been able to attend one or more of the dates and will have helped make it the rousing success it so richly deserved. We hope to see many new members joining the ICC as a result of this exposure to Bing and his cinematic talents.

On a different note, I was not able to convey my sadness in our last issue at the loss of one of our most prominent and respected members. Lionel Pairpoint had a wonderful way with a word. His columns in BING magazine were uniquely his own, managing to be both thought provoking and humorous at the same time. It was a genuine pleasure for me to have been able to work with Lionel and Malcolm Macfarlane to bring to fruition our book *The Chronological Bing Crosby on Television*. His passing leaves a tremendous void in our Club, and one that certainly cannot be easily filled. My heartfelt condolences go out to his family and close friends.

In closing, I wish to thank the ICC members who've taken the time to contact me offering their support and encouragement. It means a great deal to know that you approve of my new role within the ICC. However, I must ask that if you do phone me, I would greatly appreciate it if you could keep the topic of discussion to Bing Crosby. A few members have been phoning to discuss their various ailments and frustrations, everything but Bing-related news. My apologies to anyone I may have been brief with in this regard. While I can sympathize with your situations, my busy work schedule simply does not afford me the luxury of having an abundance of free time, so your brevity on such matters is much appreciated! I thank you for your understanding and consideration.

Until next time, enjoy what's left of the Summer!

Greg Van Beek

As I put this issue together, I could not help but notice how many people are saying nice things about Bing in it. Naturally, it is to be expected that this would be the case in a magazine honouring Bing but we do try to avoid the starry-eyed comments that sometimes devalue other similar magazines. In fact, we aim to be a more serious and balanced periodical where the opinions expressed can not only be taken as valid but valued as genuine and mature assessments. If we start wearing rose-tinted glasses too often, please tell me.

With these comments in mind, in this issue we have news of a wonderful new book by Norman Wolfe about Bing which will be available to ICC members at the end of the year. This gives a realistic and honest view of

Bing's life and I am sure that all members will be fascinated by it.

Wayne Martin and Pete Cakanic are not with us this time but they promise to submit articles for our winter edition. Otherwise all the regulars are here including Martin McQuade with a detailed report on his meeting with James Sheldon, who directed Bing's sitcom series. We take a look back the summers of 1945 and 1975 with Gord Atkinson and Ken Crossland respectively. Our thanks to Jon Oye who has kindly provided our back cover for us from his collection.

Every edition seems to bring sad news of the death of a Crosby stalwart and this time we note the loss of Vernon Wesley Taylor, who was a veritable giant in the Crosbyana world. Norman Wolfe has a brief tribute.

The 40th annual Leeds event is on the horizon and we hope to have a bumper attendance this year with some special guests. See you there!

Malcolm Macfarlane

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SECRETARY / TREASURER'S REPORT

At the time of writing this brief report our arrangements for the 40th Leeds event are tentative, but we do know that Carolyn Schneider (Bing's niece, the daughter of Bing's sister Mary Rose) will be along to share with us her involvement with Bing's life and times. It will be particularly pleasing for Carolyn to be with us as this will be the first time that any member of the Crosby family has attended our annual tribute. Carolyn spoke at the Gonzaga event in 2003 and was very entertaining indeed with many amusing stories of the time she lived at Bing's home in Holmby Hills when she was under contract to Paramount. Several USA members are coming as well including Judy Schmid, Jane Fitzgerald and Mary Quinn. The years are speeding by and our numbers thin with each passing year so I trust that, as many members as are able will come along to share in our annual tribute to Bing's unequalled musical legacy.

Summer is traditionally quiet as far as new Bing releases are concerned but we are ever thankful that the team producing the wonderful Jonzo series continue to work their magic in bringing us Bing's commercial output on CD. The series has now reached August 1945 with the Burke – Van Heusen track, "That Little Dream Got Nowhere" and this brings the tally of recordings on the Jonzo CDs to 879. Further volumes are expected towards the end of the year. Ken Crossland has the details of the latest issues in *Keeping Track.*

NEW MEMBERS

ENGLAND

Neil Woodward (Lancashire)

UNITED STATES

Canadian & US members will be featured in our winter edition.

DONATIONS

Mrs Margaret Flaherty on behalf of Walter Flaherty, her late husband. Arthur Blood, Malcolm Heywood, E G Allen, Ronnie West, John Davis, Michael Tyce and Frans van der Kollf.

Our grateful thanks to all concerned.

DEATHS

With great sadness I draw your attention to the passing of the following UK members.

John Flemming (Driffield, East Yorkshire), John Pritchard (Chester), Tony Slaughter (Saltdean, East Sussex), Ernest E. Munson (Heanor, Derbyshire), Wally Flaherty (Abergele, Conwy).

Our condolences to family and friends.

MEMBERSHIP

Happily, our membership total continues to hover above the 1000 level but we are losing many members to death and several members have not rejoined this year. Perhaps our membership total has peaked unless we can find imaginative ways to attract new recruits. Wig and myself would be interested to learn your views on how we can reach out to prospective members, particularly those who do not know of the ICCs existence. Please write or e-mail with your suggestions.

Following appeals from Wig and myself, the great majority of members enthusiastically renewed their subscription to the ICC for 2005. Members indicate in their letters that they are proud of what has been achieved on behalf of Bing by the ICCs enthusiastic officers and contributors over the years since his untimely passing in 1977. Bing's flag is a proud one to fly but outside the ICC it does not get raised very often.

Recent events in New York and California involving our Hon. President and other enthusiastic members will have helped raise Bing's profile but getting national radio and TV interest in his legacy seems almost a lost cause. Ken Crossland believes that broadcasters have conspired to write out some periods of musical history and we would be interested to learn what members think about Ken's view.

LEEDS 2005

30 years ago in 1975, Bing sent a greeting tape to me for playing at the 10th annual meeting in Leeds in which he expressed his gratitude to his loyal supporters for their dedicated interest over the years. Bing described the event as a significant one and we can only pondered on what he might have said about our 40th tribute in Leeds and the 69th year of the ICC. Please come along on Sunday October 2nd to share with me my humble tribute to Bing in Leeds.

The venue will again be:

Weetwood Hall, Conference Centre & Hotel
Otley Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire. LS16 5PS

Telephone: 0113 230 6000
Website: www.weetwood.co.uk
A Carvery Dinner will be provided and please send me a cheque for £23 to book your place.

CALENDAR 2006

Ron Bosley is working on what will be our 17th calendar and as always it will contain some fascinating photos. It is hoped to have it available by October for the Leeds meeting.

Until October, or December if you cannot make it to Leeds. My kindest regards to all members.

Michael Crampton

Bing retrospective in New York

As Greg Van Beek has already mentioned, a major Bing Crosby Retrospective has been presented by the Film Society of Lincoln Center in New York. Martin McQuade has been the driving force behind this and our thanks go out to him. We shall have further details of the actual happenings in our next issue but this is what was planned.

Going Hollywood Excellent Print
Raoul Walsh, 1933; 80m (plus rare surprise short film)
Wed July 20: 2; Fri July 22: 6:20 (introduced by Gary Giddins)
The Country Girl New Print
George Seaton, 1954; 104m
Wed July 20: 4 & 8:45 (introduced by Gary Giddins); Fri July 22: 6:20
High Society
Charles Walters, 1956, 104m
Wed July 20: 6:30pm (introduced by Kathryn Crosby); Sat July 23: 4pm
Sing You Sinners
Wesley Ruggles, 1938; 88m
Thurs July 21: 2:30pm & 6:15pm (introduced by Martin McQuade)
Pennies from Heaven
Norman Z. McLeod, 1936; 81m
Thurs July 21: 4:30pm & 8:15pm (introduced by Martin McQuade)
Blue Skies
Stuart Heisler, 1946; 104m
Fri July 22: 2pm; Sat July 23: 6:20pm (introduced by Martin McQuade)
Anything Goes New Print
Lewis Milestone, 1936; 92m (This screening features the original title in a print not seen for decades. It appears courtesy of the Library of Congress and has been newly preserved from an original preview print.)
Fri July 22: 4:10pm & 8:30pm (introduced by Martin McQuade)
Robin and the Seven Hoods
Gordon Douglas, 1964; 123m
Sat July 23: 1:30pm (introduced by Martin McQuade); Mon July 25: 8:35 pm
High Time New Print
Blake Edwards, 1960; 103m
Sat July 23: 8:45pm (introduced by Martin McQuade); Tue July 26: 4pm
Road to Zanzibar
Victor Schertzinger, 1941; 92m
Sun July 24: 2pm (introduced by Martin McQuade)
Going My Way
Leo McCarey, 1944; 126m
Sun July 24: 4pm (introduced by Gary Giddins); Mon July 25: 4pm
High Tor Archival Print
James Nielsen, 1956; 76m
(The 35mm print is provided by Kathryn Crosby. This is the New York theatrical premiere of High Tor.)
Sun July 24: 6:45pm (introduced by Kathryn Crosby)
Rhythm on the River
Victor Schertzinger, 1940; 92m
Sun July 24: 8:30 pm (introduced by Martin McQuade); Mon July 25: 2pm
The Emperor Waltz
Billy Wilder, 1948; 106m
Mon July 25: 6:30pm (introduced by Martin McQuade); Tue July 26: 2pm

Troubadour: Bing Crosby and the Invention of Pop Singing.

As I indicated in the Editorial, I enjoy books about Bing that have prudent, reasonable and mature judgements and Gary Giddins' book was a good example of these qualities. Unfortunately, it seems that Gary's second volume about Bing may be some years away and in the knowledge that members are hungry to read in-depth assessments of Bing's career after 1940, we have some good news. Norman Wolfe has given us permission to privately print his book, *Troubadour: Bing Crosby and the Invention of Pop Singing.*

I have read every book there is about Bing and feel that my knowledge about his career is pretty good. But, I found this 420 page tome a real eye-opener. I found myself excitedly turning each page wondering what was going to come next! In researching his book over several years, Norman undertook in-depth interviews with Basil Grillo and Gary Crosby as well as many other parties involved in Bing's life. Much of the information about Bing's financial and business affairs was new to me. The book is balanced with realistic views expressed about Bing the man and Bing the artist.

Both Ken Crossland and Michael Crampton share my positive opinion of this excellent book which would have been published in New York except that the mainline publishers there feel that, to quote them, "the market for Bing Crosby is declining with each passing year, and that there's enough out there to satisfy it." So we are going to publish it as a limited edition of 200 copies. This means that it will be a little expensive but in the best ICC tradition, it will be worth every penny. See the separate insert for ordering details.

Bing - a key personality in Ireland

We were delighted to learn last year that our member

Gerard Hanlon (who is a teacher) had been able to have Bing included in the History syllabus (ordinary and higher levels) for pupils studying the subject in Ireland for their Leaving Certificate. The syllabus looks at Dictatorship and Democracy in Europe, 1920-1945 and students are asked to be aware of the contribution of various key personalities which include Adolf Hitler, Keynes, Mussolini, Lenin, Stalin, Sir Winston Churchill, Charlie Chaplin and Bing. The teaching material states that Bing was the most successful recording artist of the twentieth century as well as looking at all aspects of his career. His date of birth is incorrectly given as 1901 but who are we to complain when Bing is given such prominence. Our grateful thanks to Gerard for ensuring that Bing's fame will be perpetuated in Ireland through the History syllabus.

Barry's Birthday Bash

As mentioned in our last issue, Barry Whittingham of Nottingham in the UK arranged a Bing get-together at his home to celebrate Bing's birthday on May 8. A pleasant day was had by all listening to Bing singing and examining Barry's incredible collection which includes music by many other artists as well. Barry's electronic equipment for audio and video work was breathtaking to behold too. Ron Bosley had brought a couple of his wonderful scrapbooks for members to see and these were much appreciated. A contingent from Essex led by Bert Bishop even stayed overnight sleeping on Barry's settees.

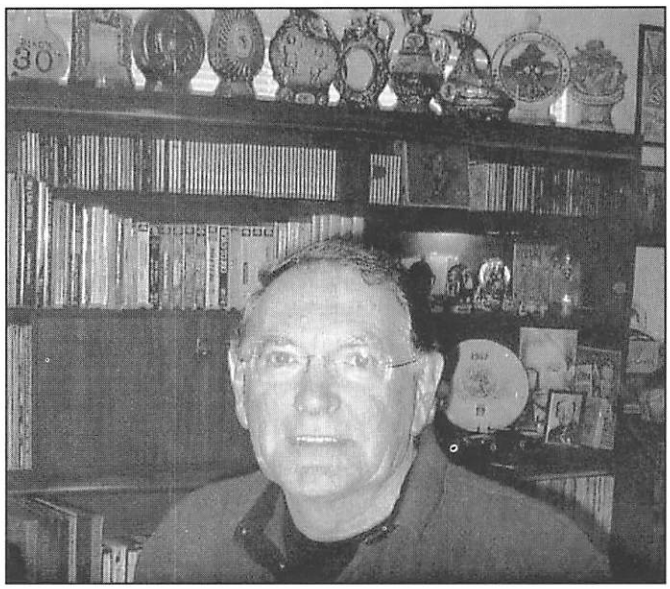
A group of Bing men cluster around Barry at the birthday bash. Photo by Trevor Wagstaff,

John Walton was there from Lincoln and your Editor was interested to learn that John is a professional singer with a group called 'Jive at Five' and he not only does a very good impression of Bing but also of singers such as Mel Torme, George Formby and Rolf Harris. Those who listen to Saga 106.6 FM will have heard John's jingle last Christmas sung in a pseudo-Bing voice. It's amazing how much talent there is in our club. As we went to press, John was attempting to duplicate Martin McQuade's hard work in New York by organising a Bing film festival in the UK and we await further news of this.

Our thanks to Barry for organising this event and please see Barry's entries in Trading Post.

Big Ben strikes again

Remember our member Ben Weaver of Nanaimo, Vancouver Island who popped up in the magazine a year or two back? Well, Ben had a wonderful article about his Bing collection published in his local paper, The Daily News on May 5. The article covered the whole back page of the broadsheet and was wonderful publicity for Bing and his achievements. Great job, Ben



Ben, as seen in the Daily News, with some of his collection

Many members get roped in to deliver talks on Bing and your Editor was pressed into action in June to speak to 105 people at a charity event in Cheshire to raise money for the Motor Neurone Disease Association (in the USA, the disease is known as Lou Gehrig's Disease or Amyotrophic Lateral Sclerosis [ALS]). It was lovely to hear the audience singing along to some of Bing's favourites and several people said what lovely memories his songs brought back to them.

Vernon Wesley Taylor

Norman Wolfe remembers Vernon.

The death of Vernon Wesley Taylor, at the age of 85, May 5, in Portland, Oregon, removes a major star from the Crosby firmament. He was one of the leading authorities on Bing Crosby's radio career and the author of papers on The Kraft Music Hall and the transcribed programs which broke the long held taboo on pre-recorded programming.

His research and writing proved invaluable to me and to Crosby scholars and biographers, among them Gary Giddins, Robert Slatzer, Donald Shepherd, and Tony Toran, Russ Columbo's biographer. He was known for a willingness to assist anyone interested in the Crosby career, although he later confessed regretting aiding Shepherd and Slatzer, whose book: *The Hollow Man*, was critical of Crosby and drew conclusions with which Taylor strongly disagreed. The authors remained grateful, however, and sent him their complete research data and notes after the project had been completed. His

later writings postulated the theory that radio, in particular The Kraft Music Hall, transformed Crosby into the intimate singer he became.

He is survived by five daughters and several grandchildren and great grandchildren.

Norman Wolfe

Bing In 2005

Greg Van Beek gives us an update on his Bing-related activities.

Last year at this time, I assembled an article for BING magazine under the heading "Bing in 2004", which outlined some activities and experiences I had promoting Bing in the first half of 2004. Since I've had several unique opportunities thus far in 2005, which may be of interest, I thought it might be nice to present them in similar fashion here.

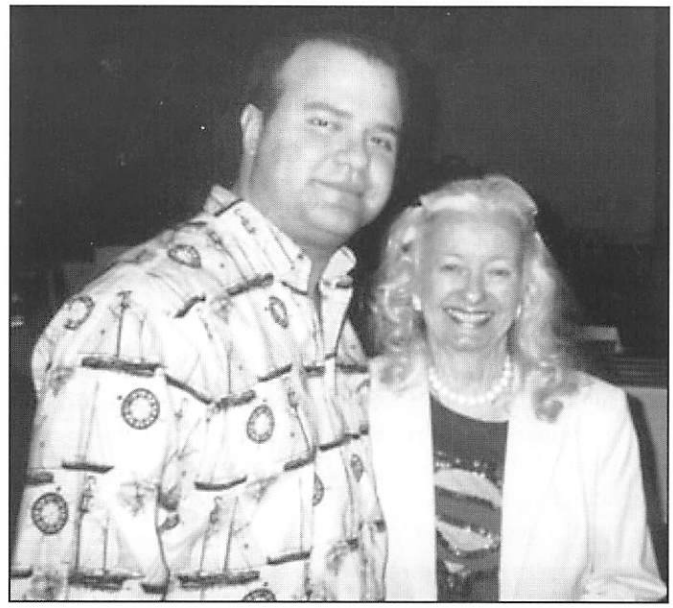
Nick & Jessica

First an update on the Nick Lachey and Jessica Simpson Valentine's Day TV special, which producer Paul Flattery informed me ABC-tv signed on for the day after "Nick & Jessica's Family Christmas" aired last December. Back in mid-February, I sent Paul an e-mail inquiring on its status. Paul replied that the show would now "be shot in April and will be an updated USO show." The idea intrigued me, with thoughts of "Mr. USO" Bob Hope possibly being a part of the show. Paul had immediately wanted to use footage of Bob on the show, and we even discussed the possibility of 'ol ski nose having his own virtual duet with Nick & Jessica. After all, Hope would never have let Bing have all the fun!

I suggested that a performance from Bob's 1967 USO Christmas tour in Vietnam of "You Brought a New Kind've Love To Me", which Bob sang with Raquel Welch, might be suitable. Otherwise, I thought it would be easiest just to have Bob "appear" with Jessica on stage and exchange some funny dialogue for a brief scene. I put Paul in touch with Linda Hope and the Hope Enterprises archivist Jim Hardy to let them decide what would work best. Paul ultimately included a nice clip-filled tribute to Bob's many USO tours, which was publicized on the home page of the official Bob Hope website (wwe.bobhope.com), in honor of Bob's May 29th birthday and the Memorial Day holiday, May 30th. The special, (subsequently titled "Nick & Jessica's Tour of Duty"), aired on ABC-tv May 23rd.

Collectors and Celebrities Show

On April 16, I was in Rosemont, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago, for the annual Ray & Sharon Courts Hollywood Collectors and Celebrities Show. This two-day event is a great opportunity to meet and chat with some vintage television and movie actors who are more than happy to sign an autograph or pose for a picture with you, for a price. The average cost for a signed 8 x 10 was $20. Of course, authenticity of the autographed can't be challenged, as you can watch the celebrity's sign them right before your eyes. Most would pose for a photo with you at no cost, but some, like Charlene Tilton, one of Mary Crosby's co-stars on the TV series *Dallas*, wanted $15 for the privilege to stand next to her and have your photo taken. In addition to the celebrity guests, there were between 100 to 125 vendor and dealer tables with television and movie memorabilia for sale.



Greg meets Noel Neill.

I was able to meet with two people who worked with Bing in some of his classic Paramount films of the 1940's and 1950's. One was in a surprising number of them. Her name is **Noel Neill**, and is best known for portraying Lois Lane on the classic 1950's TV series "Superman", with George Reeves as the man of steel. Bing actually discovered her back in 1938 when she was singing with the El Chancellor Band at the Hotel Del Mar in Del Mar, California. But she only performed at the hotel for a few days. On the evening of one of her first nights there, Bing, whose Del Mar Turf Club was right across the street, watched her perform. He was so taken with her voice, her style and her infectious smile that he hired both Noel and the band to perform at the Turf Club the very next night. She successfully performed there on weekends, Friday through Sunday, for two seasons, the summers of 1938 and 1939. She started her first set at 9:00 p.m. for one hour, then commenced her second set at 10:30 p.m. Often times, she didn't arrive back home until 1:00 a.m. All this at the tender age of 17!

Noel found Bing to be very accessible and very down to earth. She said:

> "Bing was very nice to me. I remember he was not too tall or too good-looking, but he was always very cordial and upbeat. I didn't see him every night I worked because the place was always so packed with people coming for first the dinner shows, then dancing. I do recall that once I wasn't feeling too well – it was earlier in the afternoon long before the shows – and Bing heard about it. He came up to me and said he was going to have someone drive me to the beach house that he had nearby, and that his wife

Dixie would fix me something. Well, we arrived, and obviously he had called her because she knew I was coming and greeted me so warmly. She had the maid make me some herbal tea. We spent the rest of the afternoon chatting on her tennis court, where she was giving diction lessons to her twin boys who had speech problems. She was a wonderful person who was very kind and caring. I saw her a few times after that and she was always very kind to me."

In 1943, she landed a standard seven-year contract with Paramount Pictures. One of her first films under this contract was *Road To Utopia* (which was filmed in late 1943 but not released until 1946). On her first day on the Paramount lot, Noel bumped into Bing, having not seen him for a few years. As she described it

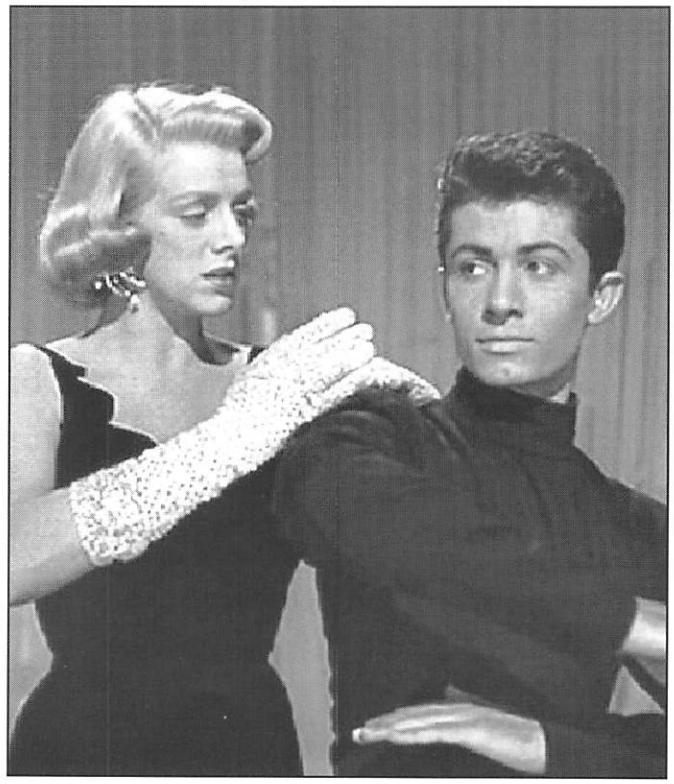
"I had just arrived on the lot and was on my way to the set when I heard someone behind me singing the Christmas tune "The First Noel". I turned around and there was Bing, as happy as can be, riding a bicycle across the lot. He asked if everything was going well for me and I replied that it was. Then he said 'If anyone ever gives you any trouble, just let me or my brother Everett know, and we'll take care of it.' Bing was so protective of me and I knew that his words were genuine. I never needed his help, but it was comforting to know that he was there for me if I needed him".

Bing and Noel at Del Mar in 1938

In addition to *Road To Utopia*, Noel also appeared in these other Paramount films, which either starred Bing, or films in which he lends his voice or makes a cameo appearance: *Here Come The Waves* (1944), *Duffy's Tavern* (1945), *Out of This World* (1945), *Blue Skies* (1946), and *The Greatest Show On Earth* (1952). She mentioned that the script for *Here Come The Waves* called for her to cut her long red hair down to a short Navy cut. Up until that time, her hair was always long and she feared the change might negatively alter her screen persona. Her fears were for naught, as her popularity continued to soar after the film's release.

For more information on Noel Neill, I suggest picking up a copy of her picture-packed authorized biography "Truth, Justice, and the American Way: The Life and Times of Noel Neill, The Original Lois Lane" by Larry Thomas Ward. It's published by Nicholas Lawrence Books, ISBN 0-9729466-0-8. Noel was most cordial to me, the passage of time not dimming her trademark radiant smile. She was happily surprised that someone my age knew something more about her career than just the "Superman" TV series. That series, incidentally, was a Sunday morning ritual with me while growing up in the 1970's and early 1980's, along with "Sergeant Preston of the Yukon" and "The Lone Ranger", all three airing back to back on the Milwaukee NBC affiliate.

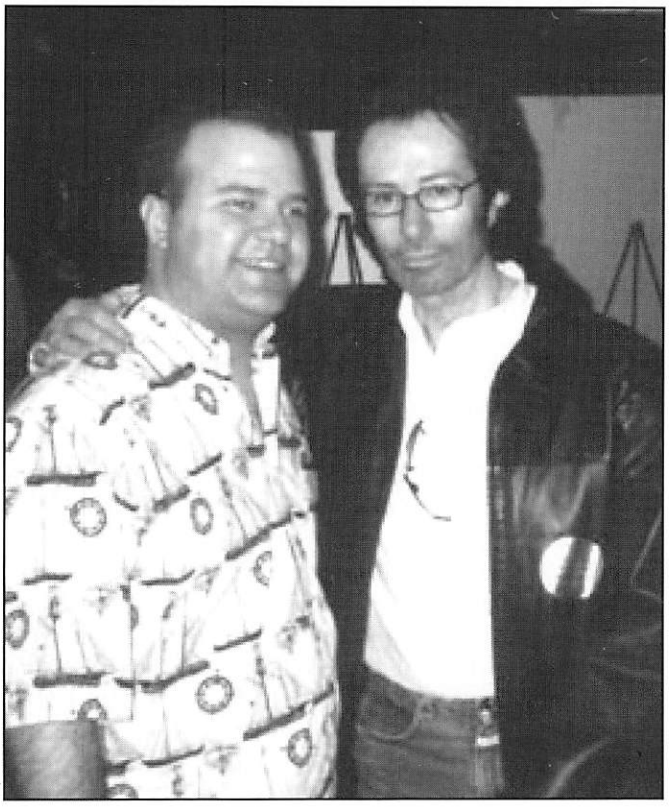
I also had a nice chat with dancer **George Chakiris**, who is probably best known for his role as Bernardo in the 1961 film adaptation of *West Side Story*. Crosby fans will recognize him from some of the dance numbers in *White Christmas* (1954). He told me he appeared in "Mandy" and Rosemary Clooney's big solo "Love You Didn't Do Right By Me". He mentioned that he rehearsed the number for three weeks with Rosemary and the other dancers, and became lifetime friends with her as a result. In fact, Rosemary mentions George during her commentary on the DVD release of *White Christmas*, indicating one point in the number where George stops and looks coyly over her shoulder. Rosemary said that single shot made him a big star, and generated tons of fan mail for him at Paramount.



George Chakiris looks coy in 'White Christmas'.

I asked George if he had any interaction with Bing during the making of the film, and he said that he didn't, but noticed that between takes, "all of them (Bing, Danny Kaye, Rosemary, and Vera-Ellen) would be sitting around looking like they were having so much fun. They all appeared to really enjoy each other's company. There was a real camaraderie between them." George also appears briefly in *The Country Girl* (1954), holding a pick in 'The Land Around Us' production number.

When I mentioned Rosemary's next (and final) Paramount film, *Red Garters* (1954), George's face lit up. "Oh I love that movie", he said. "I wish it would still be available. That was a totally unique concept for a musical, and working with Rosemary again was so much fun. That's one of my favorite films." *Red Garters* is a parody of westerns, with sparse, stylized sets, which were inspired by an article in "Life" Magazine about the western "Yellow Sky" (1949). The article showed the cast of "Yellow Sky" on sets which were clearly only false fronts, as the sets in this film are.



Greg and George Chakiris.

All in all it was a fun day. I met Cindy Williams, who played Shirley on the popular TV series "LaVerne & Shirley" in the 1970's. She was very cordial, still looking about the same as she did on the show all those years ago. I also had an interesting experience with late-1980's teen pop star Tiffany. She and I are the same age, and she was very popular during my high school years. So much so that Bob Hope had her as a guest on one of his TV specials in 1989, along with Sammy Davis, Jr. and George Burns. I took along a copy of the TV Guide advertisement for that TV special to give to her. I always videotaped Bob's TV specials, and would save the TV Guide ads with the tapes. When I handed her the ad, at first she didn't seem to remember doing that show at all! Can you imagine working with Bob Hope, George Burns and Sammy Davis, Jr. and not remembering!! Then all at once it clicked "Oh yeah, NOW I remember that ....I was SO nervous! Look at that hair!!" She seemed more concerned about her hairstyle than about the privilege of being able to work with three show business giants. When I told her I have the show on tape, she was thrilled, and begged me for a copy. She wrote down her address for me, and gave me a free autographed photo, much to the envy of her true fans standing in line behind me!

Radio

On April 23, my friend David Hendrickson met me here in West Bend to discuss plans for his third annual Bing Crosby Birthday Bash on Plymouth, Wisconsin's WJUB radio, (1420AM The Breeze) for Tuesday, May 3rd. Last year, I joined Dave in the studio live for three of the four hour broadcast. This year, however, due to a new employment situation, I was unable to obtain time off from work to join him. Undeterred, Dave brought his trusty hand held tape recorder, and we taped a "live remote" from the Crosby room of my home to be used on the show. I armed him with two CD's of material I selected to consider, but suggested he pick and choose among them and his own favorites. Dave did his usual fine job of mixing some of Bing's greatest hits for the casual fan, to rarities for more seasoned veterans. Gems like the final performance of Bing and his good friend Louis Armstrong on the David Frost show in 1971, a rare alternate soundtrack take of "Style" from *Robin & The 7 Hoods*, and a 1966 TV duet with Andy Williams. Webmaster extraordinaire Steven Lewis featured excerpts from the four hour broadcast later in the month on his Bing Crosby Internet Museum website.

I also continue to program the daily "Bing Sings" feature of the David Hendrickson show. A different Bing Crosby recording can be heard at 6:35 a.m. each week day morning on The Breeze. Recently, we featured a month of Ford Road Shows. For May, the entire month was devoted to soundtrack recordings from the Road films. June took a look back at the five albums Bing recorded thirty years ago, and July featured a Bing Crosby salute to the greatest generation. All of the songs featured for July were taken from WW2 era radio broadcasts, US Treasury Department produced transcription discs, and V-disc recordings. Since the Bing Sings feature premiered on September 8, 2003, over 400 different Bing Crosby songs have been aired on WJUB.

Speaking of Bing's birthday, on April 28th, I received a phone call from a very British sounding female, who identified herself as being from the BBC. She said she wanted to interview me for a radio program commemorating Bing's big day. The call came in at 7 a.m., and I was already at work. Unfortunately, the caller did not leave any contact information on her phone message to me, saying that she would e-mail me instead. I never heard back from her, which is a pity. Call this a missed opportunity to promote Bing. Hopefully she

contacted one of the other fine members of our ICC management team to be interviewed for the birthday program in my absence.

Kathryn Adams

In mid-May, my good friend Bob DeFlores alerted me to an article that appeared in the May 13th edition of a Minnesota newspaper, the Mankato Free Press, about a local author named Kathryn Adams Doty. Ms. Doty had just won a Midwest writer's award for her debut novel. Contained in the piece was a blurb that caught Bob's eye...*Ms. Doty, then actress Kathryn Adams, co-starred with Bing Crosby in the 1940 Universal picture "If I Had My Way"!*

Bob called me to suggest I talk to her for the benefit of BING magazine readers, noting that Bing's 1940's film co-stars are a fast dwindling bunch. He endeavored to find her phone number, and on the afternoon of May 21st, I duly phoned her residence.

She was most kind and gracious, but apologetic, as she didn't have too many recollections of Bing. "My part was very small, basically a walk-on. I believe I appeared in a clothing store, helping to find an outfit for little Gloria Jean, so I didn't get to spend much time with Bing. But he was very gentle, and did not come on too strong. He was basically laid back and quiet; a gracious man, who didn't seem to be stuck on himself. The director of the picture, Dave Butler got me the part, because he wanted Universal to put me under contract, which they did." The character she portrayed in *If I Had My Way* was simply referred to as "Miss Corbett". She laughed when I told her that, as her part was so small she wasn't given a first name.

Kathryn Adams with Dave Butler and Bing.

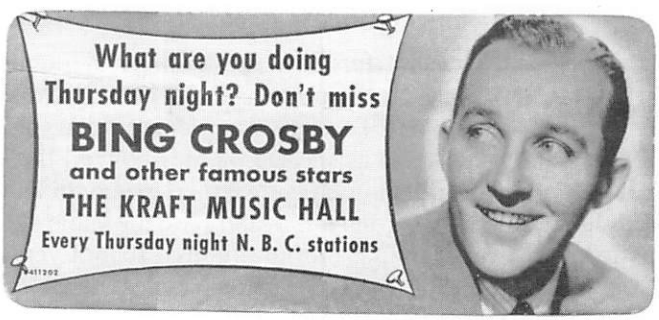
I asked if she was a fan of Bing's before she made the movie, and she replied "No, that came after the fact I think. When I signed my seven-year contract with Universal, the studio had me pose for a photograph with Dave Butler and Bing, and he was very nice and congratulatory toward me at that time. I'm sorry I don't have much to contribute; it was all so long ago. But I remember working with Bing was a very pleasant experience. Now Dave Butler I remember quite well. He was a big man, with a terrific sense of humor. I'll give you an example that will make you laugh. Dave loved horses, and I believe it was at the racetrack at Palo Alto one time that he had some older ladies visiting for the weekend. They were having plumbing difficulties at the time, so the ladies had to use the 'outside' facilities. Well Dave had rigged up a phonograph to the out-house, so that when anyone sat down on the toilet, a voice would shout "hey, can't you see we're painting down here?" That was Dave Butler, always laughing and kidding, and playing practical jokes."

Kathryn Adams Doty's first screen role was in *Fifth Avenue Girl*, a 1939 RKO film in which she co-starred with Ginger Rogers. After her Universal contract expired, she gave up acting to raise her children. She was married to Hugh Beaumont, who is best known to TV viewers for his role as Ward Cleaver on the very popular 1957-63 sit-com, "Leave It To Beaver". I said to Ms. Doty that it must be tremendously gratifying to her to know how beloved that television program still is to this day, and what a legacy her late husband left behind. She replied "Oh yes, it certainly is, especially to my children. Hugh changed the way fathers were portrayed on TV." In fact, Dave Butler directed a number of episodes of "Leave It To Beaver", as did Hugh Beaumont himself.

What's that Sound?

On May 26th came another unexpected way to promote Bing via the following e-mail:

> "Dear Mr. Van Beek, I am currently working on a book for the publishing company WW Norton, called "What's that Sound?" The History of Rock and Roll We are looking for a picture of Bing Crosby that would illustrate "Kraft Music Hall". On a Bing Crosby website I saw a cheese spread lid advertising Kraft and Bing Crosby Thursday nights. The lid was credited to you. I would like to request permission to use the image and if granted I would like to know if it is possible to get a high resolution version of the image, preferable 5x7@300 dpi. I look forward to hearing from you. Thank you, Ms. Kelly Mitchell, Photo Research Department, W.W. Norton & Company"


What are you doing
Thursday night? Don't miss
BING CROSBY
and other famous stars
THE KRAFT MUSIC HALL
Every Thursday night N. B. C. stations

Evidently, Ms. Mitchell saw the photo of the Kraft lid on friend Crissi Newton's fine website devoted to Bing (www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/3754/bing.html). I sent Kelly a high-resolution scan of the lid, along with a scan of a small "radio reminder" ad for the Kraft Music

Hall that was given out at grocery stores in the late 1930's. This was meant to be placed on top of a radio or on a refrigerator as a reminder to tune in Thursday nights to Bing's KMH. The editor of the book opted to use the ad instead of the lid. I think it's wonderful that Bing Crosby should be a part of a brand new book on the history of rock music of all things!

So, in closing, let me reprise what I wrote last year at this time. It's been a fairly active few months for me on the Bing scene so far. I hope the trend continues throughout the rest of the year!

Greg Van Beek

Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters Museum seriously damaged

We were particularly sorry to read about the problems at this museum following a fire last December as it has many links to Bing. We quote extracts from an article by Bob Pool in the Los Angeles Times of April 19

...The museum is located in a bank basement at the famous intersection of Sunset and Vine in Hollywood. A fire in an underground power chamber spewed smoke into a Washington Mutual Savings and Loan branch, coating its money vaults, tellers' counters and customer areas with toxic PCBs (polychlorinated biphenyls). But the most far-reaching damage was in the bank's basement, which houses the Society of American Magicians' Hall of Fame and Magic Museum and the separate Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters Museum.

In the museum, PCBs cover early radio sets, thousands of original broadcast scripts and transcriptions, and vintage equipment such as Bing's personal microphone. Washington Mutual officials blamed an underground electrical transformer owned by the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power for the contamination. PCBs were used as an oil substitute in electrical transformer cooling systems until 1977, when they were banned because of health concerns.

Since the December 13, 2004, transformer fire, the two museums have been closed and sealed off along with the bank. Washington Mutual officials say that the branch's cleanup cannot begin until the museums remove their displays. Museum operators, however, said they cannot move their property until it has been decontaminated. And they said that neither group can afford the about half a million dollars that the cleanup and relocation would cost each organization.

"We have thousands of transcriptions and tapes of old radio shows and old radios and technical equipment dating back to the 1920s. We have examples of the first TVs, thousands of old scripts, a huge collection of antique microphones, including Bing Crosby's personal mike — the one he felt made him sound so good," said Martin Halperin, a vice president of the 500-member broadcasters group.

"These are one-of-a-kind things. They're irreplaceable. We have broadcasters oral histories, the entire KFI scrapbook that traces that station back to its start. We have the original SigAlert radio. We've duplicated a complete working studio down there, with turntables and equipment. We have the very first audiotape machine — the Ampex 200, serial number 1."

The northeast corner of Sunset Boulevard and Vine Street has lengthy ties to show business and broadcasting. For nearly a quarter-century starting in 1938, NBC network radio shows aired from a 4½-acre studio complex that contained four 350-seat studio-auditoriums that were used for Bing's *Kraft Music Hall* show, "The Fibber McGee and Molly Show," "The Jack Benny Show" and other programs. The distinctive, curve-fronted, green building was torn down in 1964 after being made obsolete by color TV studios that NBC built in Burbank.

In 1967 the bank building was constructed by Home Savings and Loan, which offered rent-free basement space to the museums. That arrangement was continued in 1998 when Washington Mutual acquired Home Savings.

Washington Mutual has offered to pay to box up the museums' collections. Pacific Pioneer Broadcasters' Halperin said his group is reluctant to have outsiders pile antique microphones and radios and thousands of fragile discs of vintage broadcasts — including the complete CBS radio entertainment and news collection — into boxes. "Anyway, what warehouse is going to take contaminated storage?" Halperin asked....

We hope that a solution can be found to preserve these valuable artifacts.

Elvis Lives On - but he's not who you always thought he was

Our friend Will Friedwald had an article on this theme in the March issue of Forbes American Heritage magazine which was kindly sent to us by Harvey Sheirr of New York. We particularly liked this extract.

"...And though the country and blues influences were probably what most attracted the teenagers of 1956, in retrospect Presley is clearly a crooner. He comes out of a very clear tradition of great male singers of the great American songbook, especially Bing Crosby, Al Jolson, Billy Eckstine, Dean Martin, and to an extent, Frank Sinatra—as well as the leading crooners of the idioms of the blues, like Louis Jordan, and of country, like Eddy Arnold.

Presley's most obvious roots lie in Dean Martin and Bing Crosby. If you start with Crosby, and you add occasional Italian curse words and mannerisms intended to suggest various states of inebriation, then you've got Dean Martin. Take away those Neapolitanisms, replace with a whole lot o' shakin', and essentially you've got Elvis.

Those gyrations, the physical ones more than the vocal, simultaneously thrilled teenagers, annoyed adults, and gave satirists grist for the parody mill. Crosby directly anticipates Elvis's voice on his 1950 "Sunshine Cake," and when Martin does folkish material, the similarities to Presley are unmistakable."

The Crosby Imitators

And talking of crooners, Mike Kaptanis looks at a selection of singers who tried to sing like Bing.

They say that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery and you can believe Bing Crosby had a long list of imitators. Listed chronologically is a small group (some known and others more obscure) whose styles were patterned after the incomparable Bing.

1. **Harlan Lattimore**, called "The Black Bing Crosby", recorded with Don Redman and his orchestra between 1932 and 1936. He enjoyed hits with the orchestra with "Underneath the Harlem Moon" and "Lazy Bones". Billy Eckstine considered him to be his inspiration.

2. **Charlie Palloy**, who played guitar and led an orchestra (personnel unknown). He recorded basically with the cheapo Crown label (who sold through Woolworth's) in 1932/33 and covered the popular Bing songs of the day.

3. **Lee Bennett**, a deep-voiced romantic balladeer who also sounded like Russ Columbo. He recorded on and off with the Jan Garber orchestra from 1933 through the early forties. Lee finished his career as a radio announcer for a Chicago radio station.

4. **Buddy Clark** - probably sang closer to the 'high' Crosby than any of the other singers who became associated with the 'deeper' Bing such as Dick Todd, Como, and Dean Martin. Clark was prominent on radio from the middle thirties through the forties. He cut many recordings and is probably best known for his renditions of 'Linda', 'Peg O' My Heart' and 'Glocca Morra'. Buddy recorded with all the major bands of the day but sadly his career was curtailed at age 37 by an airplane crash in 1949. Had he possessed the looks of a Russ Columbo, he would have gone far in Hollywood.

Buddy Clark at work

5. **Perry Como** - not much has to be said about his life as most of the details will already be known to readers of BING magazine. He had a long and successful career starting with the Ted Weems band in 1936 and continuing as a soloist to make hit after hit. It was Perry who said that, in the 1930s, "if you didn't sing like Bing, you didn't get a job!" I saw him perform at the New York Paramount and though he was not an 'exciting' singer, he maintained a large following. As we know, Perry passed away a few years ago and he will always be remembered for his 'non-Hollywood' personality.

6. **Dick Todd** was called the Canadian Crosby and he was most popular during the 1940s singing on the 'Hit Parade'. In 1943, Bing jokingly said on the famous Rhythm Boys reunion broadcast, "I'm Bing Crosby, I sing like Dick Todd." Todd made early recordings with Larry Clinton in 1938 and then moved on to cut many tracks for the Bluebird label before fading from view in the early 1950s. His biggest hit was 'The Gaucho Serenade' which reached number four in the charts in 1940.

7. **Dean Martin** captured Bing's easy effortless style of singing and as a natural baritone, it was not too difficult for him to emulate Crosby's style and phrasing. He had a very successful career in films and later in TV with a long running show in the 1960s and 70s.

There are others not mentioned so far but nevertheless added to the legacy of the Crosby imitators and these include Al Bowlly, Bob Eberly, Chick Bullock, Bob Manning, Steve Mason and Dick Haymes among others.

Russ Columbo was deliberately omitted since he and Bing virtually started their careers about the same time. While Bing was part of the Rhythm Boys in the Whiteman aggregation, Russ vocalized with the Ambassador Trio with Gus Arnheim. Basically Bing began his great solo career in 1931 on the Brunswick label and Columbo started his the same year for Victor, although he made less than two dozen recordings. It is interesting to note that in 1932 Bing broke all records while appearing at the New York Paramount and Russ did the same at the Brooklyn Paramount. It would not be fair to list Columbo as a Crosby imitator with the others previously mentioned, since he and Bing started their careers at about the same time.

As for comparing their styles, I would say that Russ had a mellower voice but Bing had a greater range and was a more 'complete' singer, being able to sing jazz as well as ballads. Many ponder how Bing's career would have been affected had Columbo not died at age 26 through that bizarre shooting accident. There was no equal to Crosby but the movies are a visual medium and Columbo's good looks and charm might have played a large role in a successful career in films as a romantic singer, and whatever further success he might have had.

In summary, as Louis Armstrong inspired jazz musicians, so Bing Crosby's footprint will remain throughout vocal history.

Mike Kaptanis

(Editor: Thanks, Mike and of course we mustn't forget some of the British pretenders to the Crosby label such as Denny Dennis, Dave King and Michael Holliday.

In Australia too, there were a number who sang like Bing and member Graham Pascoe has done a fair amount of research into this subject. Graham mentions Pat Lawlor, Jack Davey, Les Young and Ken Bridgeford but when Danny Keating won the contest arranged by the All Australia Bing Crosby Club at the Melbourne Town Hall in 1945 he declined the title of 'The Australian Bing Crosby'. Danny did not wish to be a Crosby impersonator but, paradoxically, was happy to be known as 'The Bing Crosby of Australia'. Johnny O'Connor was billed as 'Australia's Bing Crosby' in 1946 and others who had a Bing label were Ross Higgins, Al Royal and Johnny Kellock. As Mike Kaptanis says, Bing's footprint was everywhere.

And talking of Russ Columbo...)

Crooner Style - Crosby and Columbo

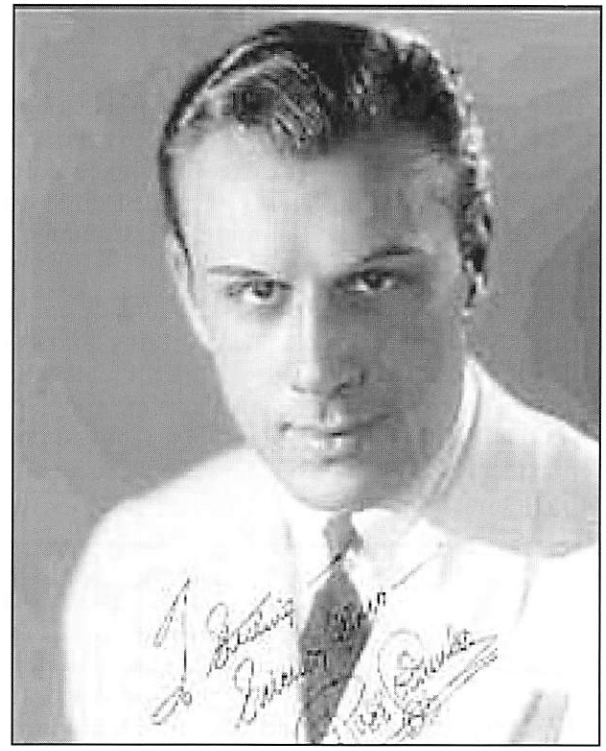
The *New York Daily News* last year had a nice article by David Hinckley which was sent to us by Harvey Sheirr, Wig Wiggins and Edwin Garcia. Here it is for you all to read.

For a while there, early in the Depression, it looked like the Battle of the Baritones could become a real thing, that Bing Crosby and Russ Columbo would duke it out in the radio and recording studios of New York until America finally declared one or the other to be the man whose romantic balladry melted her heart.

But it was a fight that would not go the distance, a fight that was over even before Russ Columbo's best friend accidentally fired a bullet into Columbo's brain on Sept. 2, 1934, making the young singer's most prominent legacy a spot on the list of American idols who lived fast and died young. But if the Battle of the Baritones was largely a promotional gimmick fanned by Columbo's manager, the aptly named Con Conrad, the music itself was the cat's meow. Columbo and Crosby both sang in a newly emerged style, a soft, relaxed tone that became possible in 1925 with the development of electronic recording. No longer did artists have to bellow into a giant horn. A microphone could now pick up and amplify any sound, and in the late 1920s, these two artists were among the first to understand the possibilities for romance and intimacy that this opened up.

"Crooner" style, this was called.

Ruggerio Eugenio de Rodolfo Colombo was born Jan. 14, 1908, in Camden, N.J., 12th child of Italian immigrants. When he was young, the family moved West, where he became a violin prodigy. He also could sing - and he was a handsome devil, which initially interested movie producers in the early days of "All-singing, all-talking!" Unfortunately for the young man who now called himself Russ Columbo, the movies were going through a "golden boy" phase, and ultimately these producers deemed him too "Latin." So mostly he sang. Which is how in mid-1930 he was fronting Gus Arnheim's Band when Arnheim also hired the Rhythm Boys, a trio that included Bing Crosby.



A publicity photo of Russ.

Columbo and Crosby got to be friends, singing with each other, often imitating each other. The Arnheim gig passed, and in June 1931, Columbo was singing on KMTR in Los Angeles when Con Conrad heard him. The two had lunch at the Pyramid Club, and Conrad laid out a vision: Come to New York with me, young man, and I will make you a radio star. By the next morning, the deal was signed: Conrad would bring Columbo to New York and guarantee him $50 a week. There was one small detail Conrad didn't mention: He was broke. In a mild irony, he paid for Columbo's cross-country rail ticket by selling his car to Crosby. Things didn't immediately pop in New York. Radio execs said Columbo wasn't exciting enough. When he finally landed a four-week shot at NBC, singing at midnight for $100 a week, the network was so unimpressed it pulled his band, leaving him to sing accompanied only by Conrad's piano. His four weeks ended August 24 and he was dropped - partly because NBC was convinced it was about to land Crosby, who had just moved east himself. At the last minute, though, Crosby signed with upstart rival CBS, which left NBC with a baritone-sized hole. NBC swallowed hard and rehired Columbo, promising him a first-rate orchestra and pushing him up to 11:30 p.m. His new show started August 27, six days before Crosby premiered on CBS. Both programs were hits. And the Battle of the Baritones was on.

Off the air, Crosby signed for 16 weeks at the Paramount at $2,500 a week. Columbo, now billed as "The Vocal Valentino," signed for 10 weeks at the Brooklyn Paramount at $3,000 a week. Both claimed to

be the "original" crooner. And both were popular enough that a newspaper-fanned "feud" was inevitable. In the fashion of the day, both were good sports about playing along. Asked about his "pal Russ Columbo," Crosby sniffed, "Pal? Say, listen, the first time I meet that guy Columbo, and it won't be too soon, either, I'm going to give him something to remember me by, and it won't be grapefruit."

They found this dance amusing, even as Columbo seemed to take an early lead in the battle. By the end of 1931, his show was said to be exceeding expectations, while Crosby's was falling short. When the Daily Mirror took a "New Crooners" poll in mid-1932, Columbo got 19,655 votes to about 12,000 for Crosby.

But by then, Columbo's comet was already cooling. The Brooklyn Paramount declined to bring him back, despite huge crowds, because CBS threatened to withhold all its artists. He then got a top-line gig playing the Waldorf, only to learn that his radio sponsor, Listerine, demanded he not sing anywhere except on his Listerine show. Meantime, CBS radio boosted Crosby with an earlier time slot and a big promotional push, even as Columbo was dropping behind in the critical area of record sales. Through 1931-32, Columbo had 10 charted hits, one of which reached No. 3. Crosby had 31, including six at No. 1.

Meanwhile, new crooners began flooding the field, making the Battle of the Baritones less singular. In June 1932, Crosby quit CBS and moved back to California, while Columbo began switching his focus to road tours with an orchestra that for a time included Benny Goodman. In March 1933, his radio and recording careers at a standstill, Columbo moved west to try Hollywood again. The Vocal Valentino landed a couple of pictures, but whether he would have become the next Rudolph became unknowable, when he died at the age of 26. By that time, Bing Crosby was on his own way to becoming one of America's defining singers. He would live until October 14, 1977, when he died of a heart attack as he walked off a golf course in Madrid. He was 73.

David Hinckley

TRADING POST

Entries are free for all items of Crosbyana and there is a nominal charge of $3 or £2 for non-Crosby advertisements. All items are printed in good faith and we cannot accept responsibility for any dissatisfaction arising from the transaction as a result of these entries Please send all advertisements to the Editor

Anderson Publishing, 102 Boyce Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K2H 6J2, Canada. [Phone (613) 721-0811, e-mail: Rosemary@anderpub.com].

Gord Atkinson's *The Crosby Years* series remains available. US and Canadian members can obtain the CDs for $24.00 US for 2 CDs and $13.00 for one CD which includes postage. Canadian purchasers should pay CAN $30.00 for 2 CDs and CAN $16.00 for one CD. Payment can be made by check, Visa or MasterCard. Please note that USA members may send US dollar checks to Anderson Publishing.

UK, Irish and European members who wish to obtain the CDs should contact Malcolm Macfarlane. The CDs cost £15.99 for two, £8.99 for one.

Dave Bennett, 1 Blackbird Close, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG22 5QL, UK (Tel: 01256 462218, Fax: 01256 328743, e-mail: blackbird@waitrose.com)

Dave has now produced the next batch of Bing's Philco shows. Everyone who has had the first batch seems very pleased with the excellent quality. The set of 5 CDs (2 shows per CD) costs £30 (including postage worldwide). Internet users can pay by PayPal and International money orders or cash (sent securely to nearest equivalent amount) are acceptable. Please see the half page advert in the last issue for further details.

Michael Crampton, address on inside front cover.

Michael has many spare copies of old issues of BING magazine and please contact him if you would like to pick some up for a nominal price. Also, there are still some copies left of the excellent book covering Bing's TV appearances. Finally, Michael has spare copies of some LP boxed sets of Bing material and he will be happy to make these available for nominal figures to members.

Festival Films, 6115 Chestnut Terrace, Shorewood, MN 55331, USA (Tel. & Fax: (952) 470-2172, e-mail: Fesfilms@aol.com)

Ron Hall at Festival Films can meet all your requirements for Bing on DVD and video. See also www.FesFilms.com

Footlight Records www.footlight.com

For your Bing needs on CD and Vinyl. Please note that Footlight in New York are now an Internet only business. e-mail: info@footlight.com

Peter Howard, 7 Balmoral Drive, Formby, Merseyside L37 6EE, UK (Tel: 01704 833795)

Peter offers, free of charge to those who can collect:

100 Bing 78s - BING magazine, nos. 47 to 92

Brian Jones, 1 Gellihaf Rd., Fleur-de-lis, Blackwood, Gwent, NP12 3UY. UK

WANTED

A video or DVD of the Bob Hope film *Beau James.*

Joyce Pairpoint, 86 Ellesmere Avenue, Mill Hill, London NW7 3HD, UK (Tel: 0208 959 3394)

Your Editor is helping Joyce dispose of her late husband's collection. Those interested, please contact the Editor for a list of what is available. Ideally we are looking for purchasers to collect the items if at all possible.

The Record Centre, 45-46 Loveday St., Birmingham B4 6NR, UK (Tel: 0121-359-7399, e-mail: Raypurslow@blueyonder.co.uk)

Ray Purslow and his team are real supporters of the Crosby cause and for your Bing CDs (and LPs) contact Ray.

Redmond Nostalgia Company, P O Box 82, Redmond, WA 98073-0082, USA. (Tel: (425) 774-1819, Fax (425) 774-8076, e-mail: redmondnostalgia@aol.com)

David Kiner offers a comprehensive list of Bing Crosby CDs. Each CD is one hour long containing two 30 minute radio programs, unless otherwise noted. All programs have been professionally re-mastered for excellent sound quality. All CDs are professionally printed and come sealed in cases with printed inserts.

CD'S ARE $8.95 EACH. BUY 10 CDS, GET ONE FREE!!!

Shipping is $4 per order within the United States. Overseas Airmail shipping is $5 for the first CD and $1.50 for additional CDs.

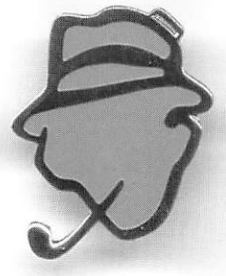
Contact the company for details of what is available.

Select Circles, P. O. Box 302, Riverside, CT 06878, USA (Phone: 203-661-8421)

Select Circles have a large stock of Bing CDs. Write or call for information.

Barry Whittingham, El Rancho Grande, 25c Garton Close, Cinderhill, Nottingham NG8 8RZ, UK (phone: 0115 913 4240, e-mail: barry.whittingham @ntlworld.com)

Barry is offering lapel green enamelled alloy badges. See image. Actual size is $1^{1/4}$ inches (26 mm) tall by $^{7/8}$ inch (22 mm) wide. Cost (inc. p & p) £5 in the UK, £5.50 for Europe & Ireland and £6 for the rest of the world.



BING BINDERS

Keep your magazines in mint condition by storing them in these specially made binders. They have blue covers with BING in gold on the spine and hold 10 copies, which allow them to either be inserted or removed, yet also open flat for easy reading. Costing £6.99 inc postage, £7.99 to Europe, £8.99 elsewhere, they are available from Ken Mason, 12 Wycomb Grove, Melton Mowbray, Leics. LE13 1EQ

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Crosby Clubs Around The World

The ICC is pleased to be associated with the following Crosby organisations.

Bing's Friends And Collectors Society,

Hobie and Cathie Wilson, 426 Park Place Drive, Petaluma, California 94954-6647, USA (tel. [707] 762-5570 - e-mail bingsfriends81@sbcglobal.net)

The Victorian Bing Crosby Society

Bob Neate, 22 Pakenham St., Blackburn, Victoria, Australia 3130. (tel. [03] 9877 1983)

Internet sites:

Bing Crosby Internet Museum: www.kcmetro.edu/~crosby/

This is a wonderful site which carries up-to-date news and has a lively discussion board. Not to be missed by those on the net.

The Immortal Talents of Bing Crosby

http://www.geocities.com/BourbonStreet/3754/bing.html

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OTHER APPRECIATION SOCIETIES

We have reciprocal arrangements with the following clubs and societies for publicity purposes. They kindly advertise our club in their magazines and we are very pleased to return the favour.

In Tune International, Flat 9, Milchester House, 12 Staveley Road, Eastbourne, East Sussex, BN20 7JX, UK, (Tel/Fax: +44 (0) 1323 412698

e-mail: gerry@stonestreet13.freeserve.co.uk,

website: www.GnuDawn.co.uk/intune) Described as the magazine for lovers of the golden age of popular music, this excellent periodical contains 40 pages about nostalgic and easy listening music. Subscriptions, which cover six issues, are £17.40 for the UK, £21 for Europe and £30 for the rest of the world. Payment can be made by credit card. Highly recommended.

Memory Lane, P. O. Box 1939, Leigh-on-Sea, SS9 3UH, England.(www.memorylane.org.uk

e-mail: mail@memorylane.org.uk)

Memory Lane is a lively magazine specialising in music of the 1920s through to the 1950s. Although the emphasis is placed on British dance bands and vocalists of the 1930s and 1940s, *Memory Lane* also covers the American scene, jazz, big bands, personalities, music hall and variety artistes. Regular features on Al Bowlly - one of Britain's favourite vocalists. Published quarterly and attractively printed and presented, each edition includes exclusive articles by a team of world-class writers and journalists plus Picture Pages, CD and Cassette reviews, Readers letters, discographical features and the advertisements that you will want to read. A "*must*" for 78 RPM collectors. 3 First Class stamps (or 3 IRCs) will bring a sample copy and full details.

Vintage Record Mart, 'Sarsden', Lower Common, Aylburton, Nr. Lydney, Gloucestershire GL15 6DR, UK

This is a 32 page quarterly trading magazine for collectors of 78s. Annual subscriptions are UK £8, Europe £10.40, USA & Canada £12.20, Australia and New Zealand £12.80.

International Tony Bennett Appreciation Society, c/o Mark Fox, 15 Kilpin Hill Lane, Staincliffe, West Yorkshire, WF13 4BG, UK (phone: 01924 401909, e-mail: markfoxtbas@hotmail.com).

Pat Boone Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 63, Sunderland, SR1 1PN, UK

Eddie Cantor Appreciation Society, c/o Michelle Malik, 14611 Valley Vista Blvd., Sherman Oaks, CA 91403, USA (email: info@EddieCantor.com

website: http://www.eddiecantor.com/)

Rosemary Clooney, http://www.rosemaryclooney.com/

The Doris Day Society, 31 Kirkfield Rise, Ambleside, Cumbria LA22 9DX, UK

The Deanna Durbin Society, c/o Denis Holland, 84A Wolverhampton Rd., Stafford ST17 4AW, UK (phone: 01785 213987).

Dick Haymes Society, c/o Roger L. Dooner, 2951 Tyler St., NE Minneapolis, MN 55418, USA, or Maurice Dunn, 16 Cradley Park Road, Netherton, Dudley West Midlands, DY2 9SR, UK (web site: http://www.dickhaymes.com/dhsociety/index.html)

International Al Jolson Society, c/o John Wehrman, 1195 Hickory Hill Drive, Green Bay, WI 54304, USA (e-mail: JWWehrman@aol.com - web site: http://www.jolson.org/ - see also http://www.mikescaife.btinternet.co.uk/ for Mike Scaife's Scottish branch)

Frankie Laine International Appreciation Society, c/o Tony Cooper, 18 Napier Crescent, Seamer, Scarborough, North Yorkshire YO12 4HY, UK (phone / fax 01723 863022 - email: tony@flias.com , website: www.btinternet.com/~flias/)

The Dean Martin Association, P. O. Box 80, Uckfield, East Sussex TN22 1ZR, UK

The International Mills Brothers Society, c/o Daniel Clemson, 604 N. Market St., Mechanicsburg, PA 17055-2727, USA (Phone: (717) 697-4271, e-mail: MillsBros1@aol.com)

Nelson Riddle Appreciation Society - Alan Wright, 4 Jardine Cottages, Templewood Lane, Stoke Poges, Bucks SL2 4BQ, UK (Phone / Fax 01753 663869, website: www.btinternet.com/~mike.leach
e-mail: mike.leach@btinternet.com)
Sinatra Music Society - Mrs Margaret Cummings, National Secretary, 36 Hillcrest Rd., Wylde Green, Sutton Coldfield B72 1EN, UK (tel: 0121-350-0683,
website: www.sinatra-ms.com/Sinatra.html)
Sinatra Music Society, Dublin Branch, c/o Chris Hitchcock, 21 Roselawn Walk, Dublin 15, Ireland (phone: 01 8212418)

Kate Smith Commemorative Society, P. O. Box 3575, Cranston, RI 02910, USA (e-mail: pinky@wzrd.com - website: http://katesmith.org/)

Andy Williams Appreciation Society, P. O. Box 5, Westerham, Kent TN16 1UE, UK

Books 'n' Bing

Heroes And Villains

by David Steen - published by Genesis Publications ISBN: 0904351939 Regular copies: £150 - Deluxe copies: £250 (+ shipping: UK £9, EC £18, USA £24, Rest of World £33). 144 pages, 103 photographs

Remember Bing telling the story of how he was barred from Claridges for practising his golf in the corridors? We had heard the story but we had never seen the photo of the event which was blamed for Bing being unable to book a room at Claridges for a while. Well now, thanks to this new book, the photo has reappeared.

The book is a very expensive limited edition of 1250 copies and has been accompanied by an exhibition of the photographs at Hoopers Gallery in London EC1. David Steen's introduction to photography was as a 15-year-old school-leaver joining *Picture Post*. It was the ultimate training ground in photojournalism, and the launch pad for his career. After National Service, he moved to Fleet Street, first to a bright new title, *Women's Sunday Mirror*, and then he had a year as a staff photographer with the *Daily Mail* which was probably when he took the photo of Bing. This is how he describes it in his book:

"This was one of my first assignments. Bing was meant to come out of Claridges and play a few show rounds of golf for the press but it's raining and he says, 'that's it boys, no photos!' Everyone leaves but I go round the back and I get into the lift with Bing and ask him whether he practices indoors, and he shows me. Claridges asked him to leave for that. It was home to kings and queens and they didn't want people like Bing Crosby playing golf in the corridors.

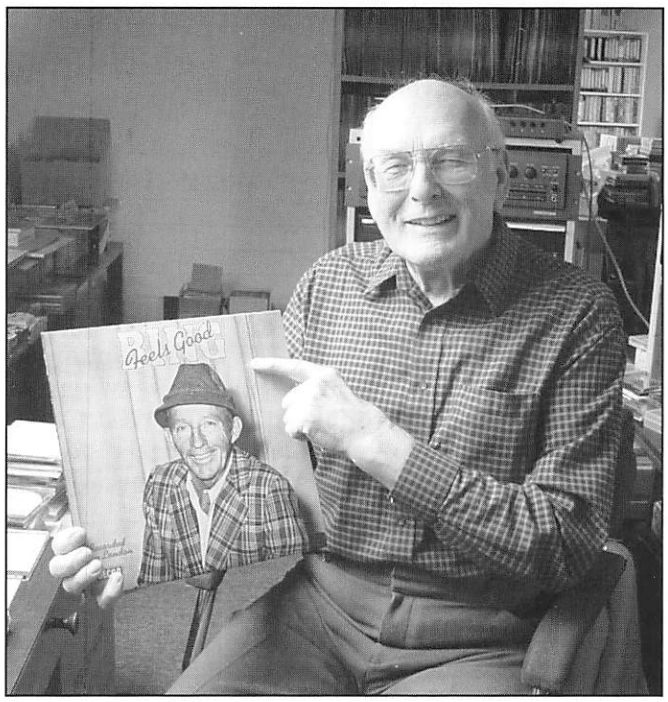
Mr. Steen went on to freelancing, Queen Magazine, Nova, the Sunday Times Magazine, international magazines around the world, over the years covering projects as diverse as riots in Harlem to a film set in Acapulco.

Milne Magic

As a young man in the UK, your Editor often purchased Bing's LPs on the Brunswick and Ace of Hearts labels and noticed the words "Produced by Geoff Milne." When the Coral LPs came out, they again were produced by Geoff Milne and years later I noticed independent label LPs and then CDs bearing those descriptive words. Very early magazines issued by the British Crosby Society indicated that Geoff was an important contributor to the club in its formative years being Assistant Editor and then Joint Editor with Reg Davis. He frequently reviewed Bing's new films as well.

When ascending to the dizzy heights of Editor of this august publication, I finally made contact with this long-term Crosby wizard and found him a most helpful

and friendly man. Our contacts were by phone or letter and we had not actually met until April this year when I called at his home in Worcestershire to pick up a huge number of old Crosby magazines which had come from the late Colin Pugh's collection. Geoff has a wonderful studio and archive and I could have spent days in it looking at the material which varied from Bing to The Beach Boys to Queen as he has very wide tastes.



Geoff in his studio holding an early LP cover for Feels Good, Feels Right which was never used.

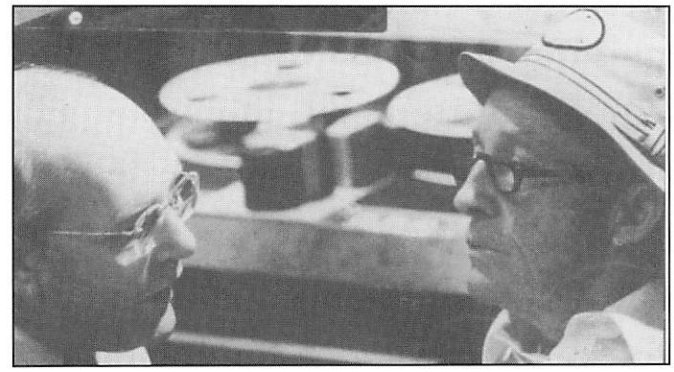
Over lunch, I was fascinated to learn a little more about his background. Born in 1924 in London, Geoff had wartime service with the RAF and then joined BOAC as a cashier at its London outlet. Already a committed Crosby man, he thought it would be wonderful to work in the record industry and because Bing's records in the UK were issued by Decca on its Brunswick label, he applied to join them. He had to make several applications until eventually in 1950, Decca took him on in a junior admin role.

Geoff would frequently visit the floor containing the artists records and he diligently copied down the details of Bing's recordings from the cards and this information was used by Reg Davis, (then Editor of the club magazine) who produced an early discography. The information gleaned by Geoff provided the basis for the wonderful "The Road to Bing Crosby" limited edition publication issued in the early 1960s.

Geoff's interest in the artists files at Decca led to him being promoted to a position working with the A & R man Hugh Mendl and in due course he rose to be Brunswick Label Manager. Naturally he gave priority to reissuing Bing's material and we had the superb Ace of Hearts and then the Coral issues. Geoff was pressured to use simulated stereo on those Coral issues and he has always regretted this. It was a commercial instruction because the company wanted to give the records a bigger sound in keeping with the times.

Over the years, Geoff had a number of meetings with Bing and also he went to Ireland in 1966 at George O'Reilly's invitation to watch the recording of Bing's *A Little Bit Of Irish* TV special. In 1975, Bing was encouraged by John Scott Trotter (who had been a long-time friend of Geoff's) to talk to him about Decca in the UK issuing the 'Southern Memoir' tracks which Bing had recorded at his own expense in January 1975 and which no record company seemed interested in picking up. Naturally, Geoff was delighted to become involved and he recalled that the negotiations were with Bing direct and were very relaxed as Bing didn't drive a particularly hard bargain. He always found Bing warm and friendly. He persuaded Bing to record the Tom Sawyer book and Geoff laughed as he remembered the actual recording sessions spread over three days and Bing's occasional fluffs which he supplemented with colourful language. Most of the sound effects on the album were done by Geoff himself – the sound in the cave for instance was achieved by recording a dripping tap in the Decca washroom and then doctoring the effect appropriately.

Geoff built on the Tom Sawyer session by asking Bing to record an album of standards and this became the *Feels Good, Feels Right* album. When selecting the material, he made a number of visits to Bing's rented house in London and as Bing could not recall one particular song, Geoff had to sing it to him leading Bing to remark "That was very good. You should record it." There is a picture of Geoff with Bing on the back of the LP and in this he is again singing a few words of a song to Bing to illustrate a point.



Geoff sings to Bing.

Apart from Bing, he formed close relationships with a number of other artists, notably Vera Lynn and Anne Shelton. In fact, Bing's appearance on the Vera Lynn Show in 1975 came about because of Geoff's involvement. He had arranged to visit Vera Lynn at her home but as he was expecting a call from Bing, left details of where he would be. As he arrived at Vera's home, her husband greeted Geoff with the news that some nut who said he was Bing Crosby wanted to talk to him. Geoff explained that it really was, and then spoke to Bing. At the end of the conversation, Geoff asked Bing if he would like to speak to Vera and he had a very pleasant conversation with her which resulted in Vera asking Bing if he would guest on her show. Funny how

these things come about.

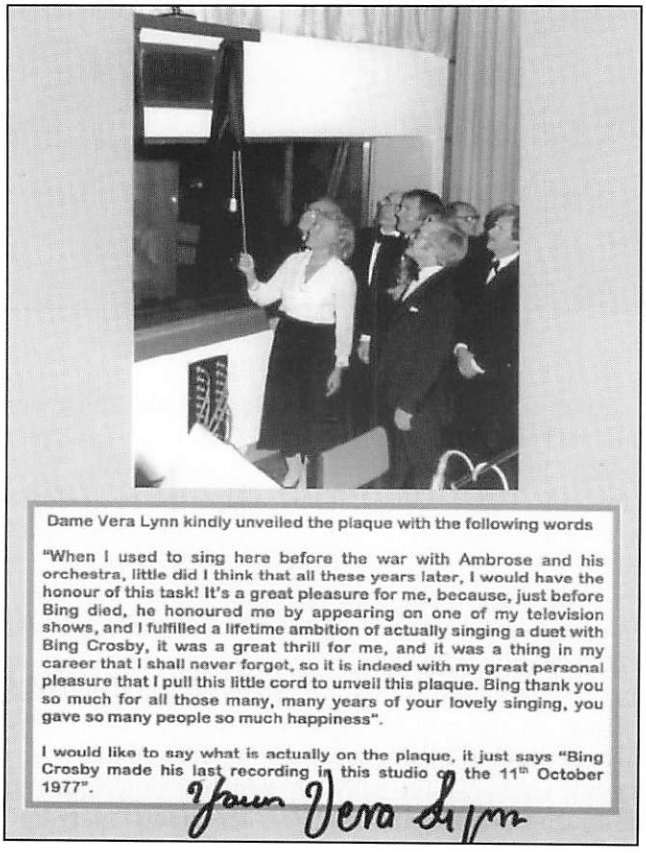
Geoff often reported to Sir Edward Lewis who formed Decca in the USA and who ran the British arm until his death. Incredibly Lewis had never met Bing and Geoff arranged a lunch at Decca House in London in 1975 which he described in a letter to me in 1996.

> I do remember that it was quite a feat to get Bing to come in for luncheon. He originally excused himself by saying that he didn't eat much during the daytime, but when I explained to him the relationship between himself and the English Decca company, a fact that he had not appreciated, and that our chairman, Sir Edward Lewis, had never met him, he agreed. Need I say, he ate a hearty lunch! When Bing and I stepped out of the lift at Decca House on his departure, he was almost mobbed by staff from the building, and hastily ran to his car parked nearby. He explained to me that he was always afraid of being jostled and knocked over—I can vouch for this, since he usually walked rather slowly in his later years, as if intent on maintaining his balance.

Polygram acquired the remains of Decca within days of Lewis's death in January 1980 and Geoff then left the company and worked for other labels. He is still very busy now as he is preparing various nostalgia CDs. His current Crosby project is a double CD for Jasmine called *The Crosby Brothers* which will feature Bing recordings with Bob Crosby's various combos, the two of them together on Bing's Chesterfield show and Bob singing some of Bing's hits.

We are all in Geoff's debt for the work he has done on our behalf for over half a century. Long may he continue to work his magic.

Malcolm Macfarlane



Dame Vera Lynn kindly unveiled the plaque with the following words

"When I used to sing here before the war with Ambrose and his orchestra, little did I think that all these years later, I would have the honour of this task! It's a great pleasure for me, because, just before Bing died, he honoured me by appearing on one of my television shows, and I fulfilled a lifetime ambition of actually singing a duet with Bing Crosby, it was a great thrill for me, and it was a thing in my career that I shall never forget, so it is indeed with my great personal pleasure that I pull this little cord to unveil this plaque. Bing thank you so much for all those many, many years of your lovely singing, you gave so many people so much happiness".

I would like to say what is actually on the plaque, it just says "Bing Crosby made his last recording in this studio on the 11th October 1977".

Yours Vera Lynn

And talking of Vera Lynn…

Bing made his last recordings in the BBC's Maida Vale studio and some time later, a plaque was unveiled in the studio by Dame Vera Lynn herself. ICC member Trevor Wagstaff put together a photo of the event with the words Dame Vera used to unveil the plaque under it and he sent it to her. She kindly signed it and wrote a nice letter in reply which concluded with the words:

> "Thank you for the magazine. Look forward to reading it. Best wishes to you and your members."

Well done, Trevor. The photo (and the words) prepared by Trevor is reproduced opposite.

Counterpoint, Derived from Operatic Methods, Is The Essence of Trotter's Crosby Accompaniments

Alan Matheson from Vancouver in British Columbia sent us a June 1939 copy of a short-lived swing era magazine called *Tempo* published on the West Coast, This contained a section called *Arrangers' Round Table* in which Paul H. Zens considered the work of John Scott Trotter.

If you've ever wondered about the idea behind the arrangements for Bing Crosby's accompaniments . . . well, it's simple: look to opera.

Operatic accompaniments, if you stop to think about it, are virtually compositions unto themselves —entirely separate from the vocal line. Operatic composers intend that the singer shall be free from anything restrictive of an untrammeled rendition.

Trotter, of course, hasn't gone whole hog with this idea. His arrangements embody the fundamental idea of eliminating the vocal line instrumentally, leaving the melody to be handled exclusively by the vocalist; but goes further than to consider the accompaniment as a mere prop. It must, he feels, be itself an interesting piece of material—complementary in all respects to the vocal line, most especially to the context: and sense of the lyrics.

Interprets Lyrics

Trotter studies the lyrics for meaning, both obvious and hidden, and then mulls over his analysis to get a sort of psychical feel of the mood of the song as a whole—and of the phrases and even of separate lines and individual words. In listening with him to several Bing recordings it was interesting to note how frequently a single word had suggested a particularly descriptive musical phraseoloy—and in reverse, how the accompaniment thereby set off the lyrical phrase to perfection.

Introduction Important

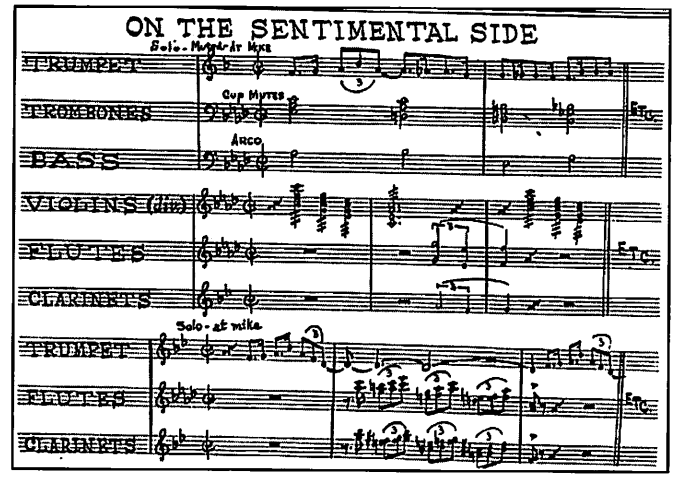
The introduction in a Trotter arrangement, is actually a prelude. Although he will frequently use excerpts from the verse of a song as Bing's entree, he is more apt to attempt to catch the essential flavor of the song in his introduction by way of original composition—although on rare occasions he will take a dominant phrase from some entirely separate composition where the mood expressed is identical with the mood he wishes to fix. As a commentary on John Scott's thoroughness it is interesting to note that he clears copyrights on such usage as "interpolations."

Sets the Mood

Once having "mooded" Bing with a four to ten-bar introduction, Trotter proceeds with the construction of the arrangement itself phrase-by-phrase—working up and down from the predominant instruments. He does not sketch out his work beforehand.

He is a stickler for the phraseological idiom. To his mind there can be only one, at most two obligatos or contrapuntal phrases in simultaneous action if the passage is to be effective. Trotter's skill lies in decorating the phrases themselves and meanwhile he is insistent that all instruments not involved in the phraseological passage lie low in the rhythmic or harmonic background.

On The Sentimental Side (Burke & Monaco), from *Doctor Rhythm,* as arranged by Trotter, presented as apt an example of his methods as could be found *(see cut above).* The use of flute and clarinet in fourths, the carry-over fiddle phrases and their tremolo work, the trombone trio—all are especially representative of the style evolved for the Crosby voice. The same arrangement is heard on Bing's Decca recording.



"Really," says J. Scott, "popular songs are small folk tunes. I don't think they should be treated as symphonies."

Notes on Trotter

John Scott Trotter, seen in this month's cover photo with Bing Crosby and Herb Polesie, the producer of Bing's latest film, *East Side of Heaven,* is a native of Charlotte, North Carolina, and an alumnus—along with Hal Kemp, Kay Kyser and Skinnay Ennis—of that State's university. Kemp's band, organized during college days, included Ennis (drums) and Trotter (piano) from the outset.

Altogether J. Scott spent 16 years with Kemp as arranger-pianist—"an eighteen-hour-a-day job"— and was, exclusively responsible for the Kemp style, including the unusual manner of vocal accompaniment which later caught Crosby's ear, which in turn led to an assignment to score Pennies *from Heaven* at the (now defunct) Major Studios. Crosby was impressed. When Jimmy Dorsey planned to go east, Bing hung out the latchstring for John Scott.

Trotter realizes that he must never exhaust his capability for a fresh musical approach; immediately after each week's show he leaves town to get a change of atmosphere, but meanwhile he mentally conjectures the next week's musical fare, returning two days before the show and ready for intensive work. He does all his own scoring. So far he has scored Bing's independent productions: *Pennies From Heaven, Doctor Rhythm, and East Side of Heaven.*

His collections of records—with virtually complete Ellington and many, many Bix's—is the envy of many another record collector. His favorite contemporary arranger is Ellington, whom he admires intensely. His records include volumes of rare foreign recordings as well as most of the standard works. He suggests keeping an ear cocked to the work of young Jean Francaix, whose piano works, Trotter thinks, will one day be given a place among the permanent examples of musical art.

Paul H. Zens

(Editor: Our thanks to Alan Matheson for sending us this article. Alan, by the way, is a very accomplished musician and he has just issued his first CD as a

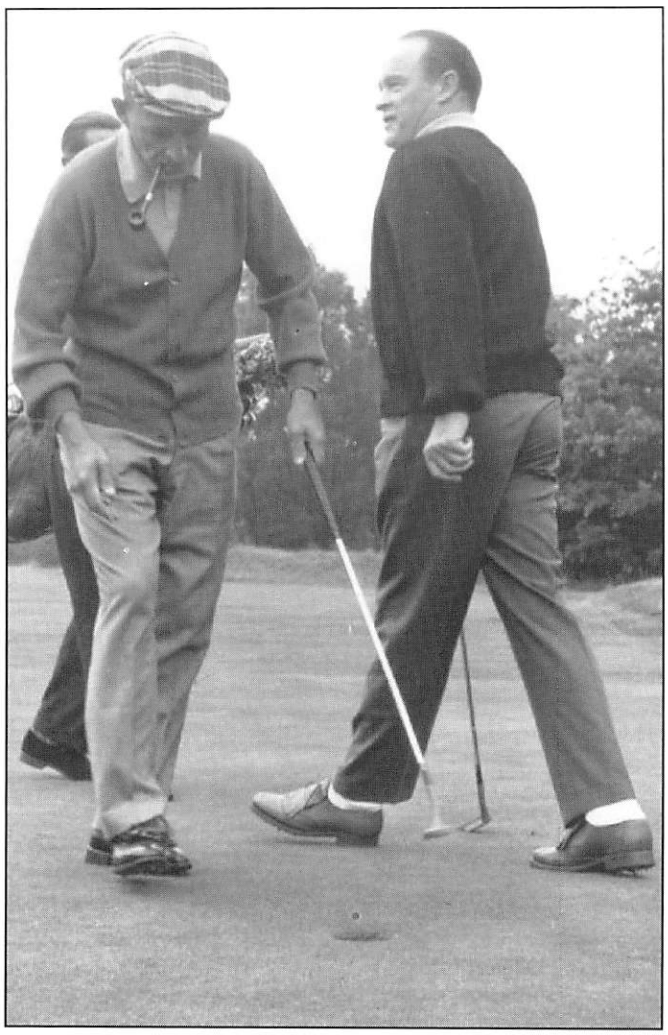
bandleader called "Intrada - Alan Matheson Nonet". There's a great version of 'From Monday On' in the album.)

ROAD to PAR with Bing & Bob

***Golf Digest* of June 1953 contained a nice article by John Fitzpatrick about Bing and Bob Hope which highlighted the contrasts between the two men.**

A stirring story of life on the links starring 2 old hams

BING CROSBY beats Bob Hope at golf most of the time - and the reason has a bearing on *your* game. How does this figure? Well, both of the "B-boys" are veteran golfers. Both are fanatics. Both play or practice almost every day of their lives. Both have low handicaps (Bing's is three. Bob's was four, now is six). Why then should one of these links luminaries consistently outplay the other? The answer lies in their personalities and temperaments. Bing is relaxed, easygoing - almost phlegmatic. He takes golf seriously, but it's still just a game with him. It's recreation. It's fun.



Bob, on the other hand, is restless, intense, driving. He loves the game, but with him it's more like work. He's constantly experimenting, constantly taking lessons from different instructors, constantly changing - all of which only tends to confuse him. That's the difference between these two fabulous fairway figures and their games. Does it give you any thoughts about yours?

In other respects, of course, the game's glamour boys have much in common. Both have made golf a major part. of their lives. Both say they get vitally needed physical and psychological therapy from it. Both, furthermore, have made major contributions to the game, and, through it, to many worthy causes. In fact there's considerable question as to who has gotten the most from what - the "B-boys" from golf, or vice versa. Hope and Crosby first became a familiar fairway twosome early in World War II, when they hit the road in golfing benefits and exhibitions for the Red Cross, bond drives and other wartime charities. The niblick nitwits, as they were sometimes called, made personal links appearances in hundreds of cities around the country and raised millions of dollars for various causes. Sometimes they played with top pros like Nelson and Dudley, or Demaret and Little; other times with local pros and amateurs or other celebrities. Often, to increase the charity take, their clubs, bags, balls and even clothing were auctioned off after the event. This of course always made for lots of laughs.

Illegal Implement

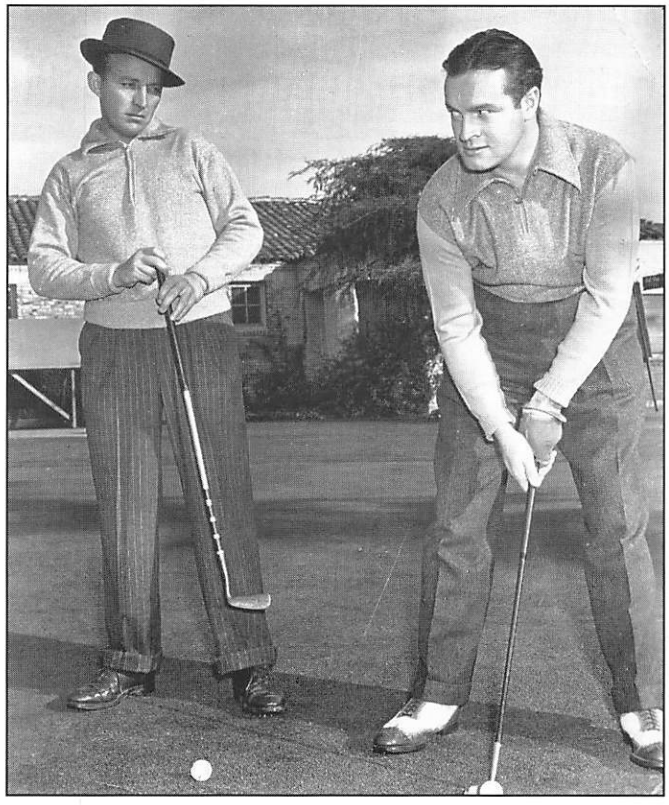
Once an auctioneer in the process of raffling-off Hope's clubs one-by-one, brought a strange looking item of golfing paraphernalia out of the bag. It had him stumped. Turned out to be a stomach pump which Bubbling Bob said he used "for badshots." The popular pair still puts on an occasional exhibition golf match for the edification of the general public and enrichment of some favourite charity. An example was the one they played last fall in Maidenhead, England, against British comedian Ted Ray (a famous golfing name, by the way) and crooner Donald Peers. This drew 10,000 stampeding spectators and raised 7600 pounds for the English Playing Fields Fund. Another was the thoroughly wacky divot demonstration which they put on recently with Dean Martin and Jerry Lewis for the benefit of the Golf Fund of the Southern California section of the PGA.

In all of these public appearances the showmen give the cash customers more of a comedy act than a golf exhibition. This is inevitable, since the galleries are usually so large and unmanageable (often mostly non-golfers) that serious golf is out of the question. Goofy golf is what the crowd wants anyway. How could a home-cured ham like Hope resist that one? Rapid Robert has a running-fire routine of stock golf gags spiced frequently with appropriate and very droll ad-libs. Bing usually humours him by playing it straight, but gets off an occasional *bon mot* of his own which stops the show.

When the crowd closes in so close around Hope that he hardly has room to swing, and no clear path for his ball, he'll yell something like, "Spread your legs a little, I want to play through!" "Will everyone please take a breath and hold it - I need a little more room!" When he needs a tee from his caddy he's apt to yell "Timber!" at the top of his lungs. If the tee breaks on the shot, and he

can snatch it up before some eager souvenir hunter, he might toss it to the boy and tell him to have it re-shafted.

Once a club was grabbed right out of Hope's hands by either an amateur comedian or over-avid collector in the crowd, just as he was at the top of his back-swing ready to start down. He unhesitatingly swung through empty-handed, without seeming to notice the loss, walked 200 yards straight to the green and pulled a ball (which apparently he had palmed) out of the hole. "That was a six," he said to Bing, "and not one of those upside down ones you usually give me either."



Quick with the quips

On another occasion he was playing in the Washington Celebrities Tournament with Ben Hogan, Senator Scott Lucas and General Hoyt Vandenburg. By a freak, the senator's ball landed in the pocket of one of the myriad spectators. "How am I supposed to play this one?" Senator Lucas asked querulously, "You aren't," quipped Hope, "the Collector of Internal Revenue plays it for you!"

One of the best impromptu gags he ever pulled was during the playing of the Bing Crosby Pro-Amateur Invitational Tournament at Pebble Beach, California, early this year. Bing, who doesn't play in his own event, has a house along the 13th fairway. On the last day unpredictable Bob took his foursome - consisting of pros Jimmy Demaret and Al Besselink, and amateur Hal Booth - into Crosby's house for a little refreshment during the round. Just as they were entering the house, Bob turned to the huge gallery which had been following them, waved and yelled, "come on in!" Luckily for everyone concerned, the crowd, numbering in the thousands, roared with laughter, but didn't accept the generous invitation.

But this kind of clowning around on the course is not really either Bob or Bing's idea of how golf should be played at all. It's just for public consumption. Actually, both of the B's are very serious and rather quiet, reserved devotees of the game. In private life both of them play it just as much as they possibly can. When they're not making movies it's 18 holes almost every day. When they are before the cameras they sneak out in the evenings for a few fast holes, often followed by an hour or two at a local driving range. Hope owns one of these right near the Lakeside Country Club where he belongs, but prefers the one at the club.

When these addicts are travelling they still get in just as much golf as they possibly can. All they need is a spare hour or two and a course - any kind of course - within a hundred miles, or so. In March, for example, Bing had a few hours' stopover in Chicago on his way to Europe with his 15-year-old son Linny (Lindsay) who has become a frequent links companion of his father and the pride of the old man's golfing eye. It was a chilly, drizzly day in Chicago. But Bing called up his old pal Charlie Penna, pro at Chicago's Beverly Hills Country Club, and suggested a quick round. Penna, thinking it was some gagster, said "Cut out the funny stuff, I know Crosby's voice." Bing, meanwhile, was shouting, singing and almost swearing into a telephone in the lobby of the Conrad Hilton Hotel - to the vast amusement of assorted kibitzers - trying to prove his identity. They finally got squared away and the two Crosbys played 11 holes with Charlie before a downpour forced them to quit.

Hope, too, gets in his licks on any and all occasions. On a personal appearance tour of England, Scotland, Ireland and France last summer, he managed to play golf every single day, despite the fact that he was doing two shows a day. On another occasion, Bob and his brother, Jack, raced like mad to catch a plane - only to miss it by a few minutes. Not the least bit perturbed, as might be expected, old "ski-nose" asked when the next plane left and when told it was in two hours said "Swell, let's go back to that driving range we passed and practice a bit." They did.

Bob does a lot of practising around home too. His house is situated right on the edge of a course, which is no accident. His well manicured seven-acre lot contains practice tees, greens and traps for use of family and friends. There are spare clubs in almost every room of the house with which Bob limbers up his swing on any and all occasions. And within easy reach of his bed is a shelf containing twenty books - all on golf. He literally eats, drinks and sleeps the game.

Bob's family also plays

Bob's pretty wife, Dolores, also plays a lot of golf, much of it with him. The children - Linda (13), Tony (12), Kelly (6) and Nora (6), all adopted from Evanston's famous cradle - naturally are learning to play. They've had numerous lessons, including some at Colorado Springs from Ed Dudley, President Eisenhower's mentor. The pro at Lakeside, their home club, is Harry Cooper.

Crosby plays most of his golf at the Bel-Air Country Club, near his home. He had a 68 there recently. Bob and Bing play together in private life quite a bit, but by no means always, each having numerous other golfing companions. One of Hope's most frequent partners is Dr. Pardee Erdman, well known Presbyterian minister of Pasadena. Another is J. Hugh E. Davis, a former Chicago advertising executive who now is in the television producing business with Bob. Both Bob and Bing also duck over to Palm Springs whenever they can (usually on weekends) to play the fabulous Thunderbird and Tamarisk layouts in that desert oasis. Jimmy Hines is pro at the former, Ben Hogan at the latter, and the boys play with them frequently. Bob maintains a small ranch home there.

Golf a psycho-therapy

Golf, it can be seen, weaves its intricate pattern through the whole fabric of the lives of these two famous men. As Bing explained it in his recent autobiographical series in the Saturday Evening Post. "Golf has provided relaxation that has kept my batteries recharged when I put too heavy a load on them. It doesn't seem to matter what my professional and personal problems are, when I step onto the first tee I get a sense of release and escape. It's my opinion that competition on the links has removed more carbon knocks and emotional burs from human minds than all of the psychiatrists' couches put together."

So there you have it. A lot of guys knock themselves out trying to become rich and famous. Here are a couple of characters who have made it and all they do is knock themselves out trying to get on a golf course. Why don't you take a short cut? Go out and play more golf !

John Fitzpatrick

Celluloid Crosby

East Side of Heaven provides three good examples of 1930s film making which will never be repeated. The first is the short time that elapsed between the start of filming and its presentation before a paying audience. The second is the extended theatrical life of a film. The third is the supporting 'B' picture that it was impossible to avoid once a film was programmed on the double bill moviegoers demanded during Hollywood's golden age.

East Side of Heaven was one of the films Bing made away from his home studio. His contract with Paramount allowed him to play away occasionally and *East Side* was the first of two he made for distribution by Universal. The second was *If I Had My Way*, filmed just one year later. Bing had a financial interest in both of them. He was guaranteed 50% of any profits. That arrangement came about when Universal wanted to employ Bing for less than his customary rate. They convinced him to invest his own money in the productions. Bing obviously thought it a good idea. The month after filming of *East Side of Heaven* was completed he wrote to songwriter Johnny Mercer:

> *"East Side of Heaven" was good fun under the expansive aegis of D. Wingate Butler. Never engaged in a more pleasant and, I hope, profitable enterprise. The budget was astonishingly low and, if John Public takes to the picture favorably, we're a cinch to make a meg or two.*

D. Wingate Butler was the film's director, David Butler. At the time of writing to Mercer on April 13, 1939, Bing was aware that the film had been brought in under budget. What he could not have known at the time was that it would go on to earn rentals in excess of $3m.

Pre-production, it was intended that Bing's leading lady would be Ann Sothern. She'd been in films for ten years without making a major impact with moviegoers and presumably her salary would have been modest. However, when she was offered the part she declined because she wanted to sing on tour with her husband's band. She had married bandleader-actor Roger Pryor in 1936. The second choice for female co-star was the well established Joan Blondell. Perhaps she was piqued at not being first in line for the part because she later wrote, "Crosby was very aloof.....he was probably that way from the day he was born."

Another matter to be resolved before filming was underway was the casting of the third-billed character in the film. That was the part of Baby Barrett, the subject of a plot tug-of-war. The search for a suitable youngster provided nationwide publicity and resulted in the casting of Sandy Henville, the child of a milkman from Los Angeles. The fact that Sandy was a girl and the part called for a boy was irrelevant bearing in mind that Baby Barrett was only ten months old and wore a diaper throughout the film. Irene Hervey, then married to singer Allan Jones (and the mother of singer Jack Jones), played the part of Baby Barrett's mother.

Bing had some musical input into the production. Johnny Burke and James V. Monaco were asked to write the four songs to be sung by Bing in the film. This was their second Crosby film outing. The previous year that partnership had provided the songs for *Sing You Sinners*. Early in the film Bing, in his role as a singing postal messenger, acknowledges the tunesmith half of the duo by delivering a musical message to "Mr. and Mrs. James Monaco". Regular arranger on Bing's Decca recordings and Kraft radio shows, John Scott Trotter, was assigned to assist Universal's in-house orchestrator, Frank Skinner. Also from the Kraft Music Hall, the Music

Bing and Irene Hervey in a scene from East Side of Heaven.

Maids were seen on screen joining Bing in singing "Hang Your Heart on a Hickory Limb". And Matty Malneck, who had been associated with Bing since Whiteman days, was featured as orchestra leader.

Shooting began on 13th January, 1939 and the film wrapped just over seven weeks later. For a film with an eventual running time just short on an hour and a half this was an impressive achievement. Even more impressive was the fact that less than three months after *East Side of Heaven* went before the cameras it was showing to the general public in Los Angeles with its New York premiere following at the beginning of May.

Its theatrical life lasted about fifteen years. Before 1950, if you didn't see it on the big screen you didn't see it. Nowadays a shooting schedule of six to twelve months results in a premiere and general release being followed within six months by a DVD release. Then comes the pay per view availability, screening on subscription channel television and a sale for showing on free to view television. Generally a film will not be seen on British terrestrial television until at least two years after its theatrical play dates. But it was a very different story before home viewing became a reality.

East Side of Heaven played nationwide in North America during the spring and summer of 1939. When first run downtown cinemas had exhausted its audience potential it played for a week in suburban cinemas before entering third run play dates out in the sticks on bookings which might be for three days only. During the war time cinemagoing boom years Universal found it easy to find a ready audience for the revival of most of its 'A' picture product and *East Side of Heaven* had a further release in the summer of 1945. In the U.K. its West End premiere was followed by blanket bookings on the ABC circuit. This was phased over several months to prevent unnecessary costs being incurred by having a lot of prints in circulation.

The Brits too had a second chance to catch the film four years later. The Odeon circuit booked the film as a support feature and *East Side of Heaven* was re-released in the spring of 1943. It was still being booked by non-circuit cinemas up until the early 1950s. This was not only for one day showings on Sundays. It had the dubious distinction of being the last film screened at Stockport's Princes Cinema on January 6th, 1951 when that picturehouse became one of the first to suffer from the post war decline in audiences. After about 1952, I doubt very much that anyone saw the film again in the U.K. until it received its first British television showing in 1979.

If you went to see a Crosby picture every time it was showing in your town you would sometimes find it playing as part of a different programme on each visit. Audiences expected two feature films every time they had a night out at the pictures. Plus a newsreel, a comedy short or cartoon and, if it was a city centre cinema, a cinema organ recital. *East Side of Heaven* was partnered by a range of supporting features during its theatrical life. They were usually instantly forgettable, so I will jog a few memories.

**Twelve Crowded Hours* was one of two films selected to support *E S of H* on its initial American showings. Richard Dix and Lucille Ball starred. Dix played a reporter exposing criminals with Lucy as his sidekick. Ten years later Lucy and husband Desi Arnaz would spearhead the exodus of audiences from auditorium to living room with the most successful television situation comedy series of the 20th century: "I Love Lucy".

**The Saint Strikes Back* was the alternative support of *E S of H* in the U.S.A. in 1939. It was the second in the series of 'B' films based on Leslie Charteris' debonair detective aka Simon Templar. George Sanders was the second of three actors to portray the Robin Hood of crime in the RKO series which ran from 1938 to 1942.

**Hotel Imperial* was part of the "full supporting programme" selected by the ABC circuit to accompany *E S of H* in Great Britain. With a running time of 78 minutes this was an above average 'B' support for the simple reason than it originally went before the cameras at Paramount in 1936 as a starring vehicle for Marlene Dietrich. Dietrich quit and Margaret Sullavan took over. Sullavan broke her ankle and the project was shelved until late 1938 when Isa Miranda became the female lead as a dancer looking for the man responsible for her sister's death. Ray Milland was the film's leading man.

**The Silver Fleet* was the main feature when Rank re-released *East Side of Heaven* in 1943. It was a wartime propaganda piece involving Nazis and U-boats. Ralph Richardson played a Dutch shipping magnate furthering the Allied cause. It plays on television occasionally and comes over as worthy but dull.

Having explored the exhibition side of *East Side of Heaven* let's take a look at how critics viewed Bing's foray into financing his own films. Its first showing in Los Angeles elicited the following from the 'Hollywood Citizen News':

> *"The picture pace is faulty in the early portions, and some of the comedy dialogue fails to register cleanly, but the whole thing tightens as it goes, and concludes effectively."*

That same city's 'Examiner' newspaper sent along a critic who seems to have watched a different movie. He wrote:

> *"It is by far Crosby's most entertaining picture to date...David Butler rates great praise for his direction and originality of the story, written by him in collaboration with Herbert Polesie. William Conselman's screenplay is flawless."*

'Variety', the showbusiness newspaper, never concerns itself with content and artistic merit. Profitability is the bottom line. Its reviewer got it right when he commented:

> *"A grand package of entertainment that will play a merry tune at the b.o.".*

The *New York Times* liked it too.

> *If there is anything in motion pictures more subtly calculated to paralyze the critical facility than Bing Crosby, it is the formula which Universal has happily hit upon in 'East Side of Heaven', at the Music Hall: Bing Crosby and a baby. Whatever the cause—and it is never too wise to inquire too nicely into the origins of the comic spirit—the result in this case is the most felicitous occurrence involving Crosby since last year's 'Sing You Sinners', a comedy which, though it shamelessly exploits several other well-known public weaknesses, including Joan Blondell, Mischa Auer and C. Aubrey Smith, is much too ingratiating to be missed in these truculent and sour times.*
>
> *Even for persons who hate crooning, the spectacle of Mr. Crosby dutifully chanting holiday greetings over the telephone for Postal Union Telegraph...should afford a certain sadistic pleasure...And those rare, dyspeptical types who hate both crooners and babies will derive an evil joy from the scenes in which Bing forced to hide the child after it is kidnapped from grandpa by mama, walks the floor in his pajamas crooning to the helpless infant.*

I'll end with an item of trivia which celebrates a first for a Bing picture. Collectors of comic books pay extraordinary sums for issues of 'Movie Comics'. That comic book commenced publication in the U.S.A. in April, 1939. It offered 64 colour pages for ten cents and featured strip adaptations of recent films. Issue 3, dated June, included *East Side of Heaven*, the first Crosby movie to be transferred to comic strip format.

Keith Parkinson

THE A-Z OF BING'S MOVIES

RHYTHM ON THE RIVER Film. Although this 1940 film was directed by Victor Schertzinger the story credit goes to fellow director Billy Wilder who co-authored the story with Jacques Thery. In an interview with Cameron

Crowe shortly before Wilder's death, he explained the genesis of *Rhythm on the River* several years before it was filmed:

> *"That was a screenplay, or rather a screen story treatment, that I wrote in Berlin before I came to America. It was a good story, and I sold it, but then they used just one little detail. And that was it. The third act was - which they did not use - about a great writer, an Irving Berlin type, who comes up to see them (the Crosby and Mary Martin characters). Destitute, the two of them, husband and wife, lyrics and music. And Berlin just takes off his coat and sits down, and he becomes the ghost writer for the two. That was the story".*
>
> In fact, the film's original title was "Ghost Music".

Bing first encountered leading lady Mary Martin in 1938 when she was singing in a Hollywood nightclub. *Rhythm on the River* began shooting in May, 1940 and the following year Mary Martin was selected as a regular guest on Bing's Kraft Music Hall. There were other KMH connections that spilled over into the film. John Scott Trotter played bandleader John Scott Trotter and Ken Carpenter played announcer Teddy Gardner. JST was also credited with orchestrating the songs used in the film. Other non-Hollywood pals of Bing appearing in *RotR* were ex-Rhythm Boy Harry Barris, who was given a saxophone to hold even if he couldn't play it and Wingy Manone who showed what a good jazz trumpeter he was. The film's press preview was set up to ensure maximum publicity. Reporters were transported by train to Del Mar, California, and they saw a few races being run before the film was projected onto a giant movie screen. NBC laid on live radio coverage from Del Mar Racetrack. The full John Scott Trotter orchestra was on hand to accompany Bing and Mary Martin on songs from the film. When the premiere proper took place just one week later at the New York Paramount the Count Basie Orchestra was part of the accompanying stage show. Critical reaction to the film was very favourable. The New York Times called it "one of the most likeable musical pictures of the season" whilst over on the West Coast the Hollywood Citizen News recognised it as a "crackerjack goodfilm." Whose to argue with either?

RHYTHM ON THE RIVER Song. It was one of six written by Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen for the film of the same name. It was sung by Bing in one of his best celluloid excursions both musically and visually. The scene is set in a pawnbrokers which Wingy Manone and his band visit in order to redeem the band's instruments. In an impressively choreographed sequence (or was it brilliantly improvised?) Bing puts a set of drumsticks to use as he sings the song whilst making use of anything on hand to maintain rhythmic momentum.

RIDDLE, NELSON (1921-1985) Conductor, arranger, composer most often associated with Frank Sinatra. And it was no coincidence that the two films with Crosby connections also starred Sinatra. Riddle received joint credit with Conrad Salinger as orchestrator on *High Society* (1956) and sole credit for scoring and conducting the songs on *Robin and the 7 Hoods* (1964). It was also at Sinatra's insistence that Riddle worked on other Sinatra films such as *Pal Joey* and *The Joker is Wild*, both released the year after *High Society*. Riddle's musical life began in the early 1940s as an arranger and trombonist, an instrument Riddle's father had played. He joined Capitol records in 1950 and divided his time between work in the recording studio and on the film sound stage. He announced retirement due to ill health in 1973 but the following year he was awarded an Academy Award for his musical contribution to *The Great Gatsby*. The music from that film has not stood the test of time, his best remembered work following his retirement comeback being a series of albums for Capitol which featured vocals by Linda Ronstadt. Crosby fans remember him for the over-orchestrated Reprise album "Return to Paradise" issued in 1964.

RIDING HIGH Film. This 1949 Paramount Picture was a remake of the 1934 *Broadway Bill*. Frank Capra directed both versions. The plot originated as a short story by Mark Hellinger called "On the Nose". For the Crosby update Robert Riskin, Melville Shavelson and Jack Rose customised it to suit the way Bing would handle it. Then Barney Dean and Bill Morrow worked on Bing's dialogue, although they received no on-screen credit. Five writers working on a short story filmed fifteen years previously might seem excessive but Frank Capra then contended he had a significant input into the finished screenplay. He appealed to the Screen Writers Guild for part writer credit but the Guild declined to support him. Twenty years after the film went before the cameras Bing was asked to make comment on the film for a book about Capra. These were his memories:

> *"You know when I learned that Paramount had secured Frank Capra to direct a picture I was going to be in, I was highly elated, because not only did I have a great respect for Frank and for the great work he had done in the past, but I knew him personally from around the golf club and was very fond of him. Making the picture was a joy. He's such a competent craftsman - knows his work so thoroughly and seems to create an air of amiability on the set that very few directors are able to achieve. He's the kind of director who instils confidence in an actor. You just put yourself in Frank's hands and do what he tells you, and it has got to come out all right. Certainly the most gratifying factor in my career has been the fact that I've been associated with great men and Frank Capra comes very high indeed on this list."*

Barney Balaban was head of Paramount at the time of *Riding High*. He decreed that no film from that studio should cost more than $2 million. Capra was told that the film should be shot in black and white, which enabled the studio to do a deal with Columbia Pictures, the studio that owned the rights to *Broadway Bill*. They wanted the racecourse footage from that film. In return Columbia wanted the rights to *A Woman of Distinction* which was a Paramount property. A straight swap resulted and footage of *Broadway Bill* was also made available. This could then be spliced into *Riding High*. As it happened, that was an economy measure that backfired. On July 7th, 1949, within days of the completed film being readied for screening, a preview was arranged in the Huntington Park Theatre. The audience laughed at the marrying of old and new racecourse footage and Capra ordered retakes. A unit was despatched to Tanforan Race Course in San Francisco, where *Broadway Bill* was shot.

Bing chose Coleen Gray as his leading lady although Capra had wanted to cast Joan Leslie. Capra also wanted George Barnes as cinematographer whilst Bing requested Ernest Laszlo, who had photographed *Road to Rio* a couple of years

Coleen Gray and Bing

earlier. Bing won that one initially but a clash of personalities ensued between the photographer and the director. Capra then succeeded in using Barnes, leading to the unusual credit of both Laszlo and Barnes on release prints of the film. The film's musical highlight was the song "Sunshine Cake", written along with other original compositions for the film by Johnny Burke and James Van Heusen. At Capra's instigation it was directly recorded on the sound stage. The usual technique was for the pre-recording of a song to be played with the actors miming to the playback. Compare the soundtrack version featuring Bing singing with Clarence Muse and Coleen Gray to the version he recorded for Decca three weeks later. That recording studio version had the benefit of Victor's Young's orchestra and trained vocalist Carole Richards duetting with Bing but lacked the immediateness of Bing accompanying himself with spoons and Clarence Muse playing guitar and using an empty box for a drum. Capra's salary was $156,000 and Bing's $150,000. The final costs of filming *Riding High* amounted to $1,921,000. Publicity and distribution costs need to be added to that total, which allowed the studio accountants to contend that the film made a loss on its initial release with North American rentals bringing in $2,350,000. Compared to Bing's previous box office triumphs it was something of a flop, coming 28th in Variety's list of box-office winners of 1949. Reviews were mixed, which could have made a marginal influence on ticket sales. Manny Farber might have been complimentary when he wrote his review for The Nation. He stated: "The movie drools democratic pride in Crosby's sugary relationship with his coloured stable boy." Interpret that any way you like.

RIPSTITCH THE TAILOR is included here to clarify the fact that it is not a separate Crosby/Rhythm Boys short. There was speculation that it was an unreleased short made around 1929 that was subsequently incorporated in *Two Plus Fours* (1930). No such film as *Ripstitch the Tailor* was shot, although the film *Two Plus Fours* is actually a story about a tailor called Ripstitch.

RISKIN, ROBERT (1897-1955) Screenwriter and playwright. Riskin had a hand, with others, in the screenplay of *Riding High* (1950) and the story basis, again with others, of *Here Come the Groom*, released the following year. Both films were produced and directed by Frank Capra, who had enjoyed a long association with Riskin beginning with the successful social comedies of the 1930s such as *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936) and *Lost Horizon* (1937). It was the 1934 screenplay of the Capra directed *Broadway Bill* which formed the basis of the remake titled *Riding High.* Capra and Riskin remained collaborators beyond the grave as far as Riskin was concerned because Capra based his 1961 film *Pocketful of Miracles* on Riskin's 1933 adaptation of *Lady for a Day.* In 1942 Robert Riskin married King Kong's leading lady, Fay Wray.

RKO Film studio which, with a radio transmitter on top of the world as its logo, introduced itself to cinemagoers as RKO-Radio. It links Bing's early on screen appearances with one of his greatest successes. It was the production company behind those 1930 releases *Two Plus Fours* and *Check and Double Check* and the releasing company for the Rainbow Production of *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945). RKO also had a distribution agreement with the Walt Disney company and handled the 1949 feature length cartoon *The Adventures of Ichabod and Mr. Toad.* The studio's origins go back to 1921 with the joining together of The Radio Corporation of America with the Keith-Orpheum cinema circuit. Although the studio operated a cut above the Poverty Row outlets it never sustained a policy of releasing quality 'A' pictures on a regular basis. The beginning of the end for the studio came in 1948 when a controlling interest was purchased by Howard Hughes. He ran it as a hobby and five years later sold it to cinema's main competitor - television. It was controlled by Desilu, the production company of Desi Arnaz and Lucille Ball.

Keith Parkinson

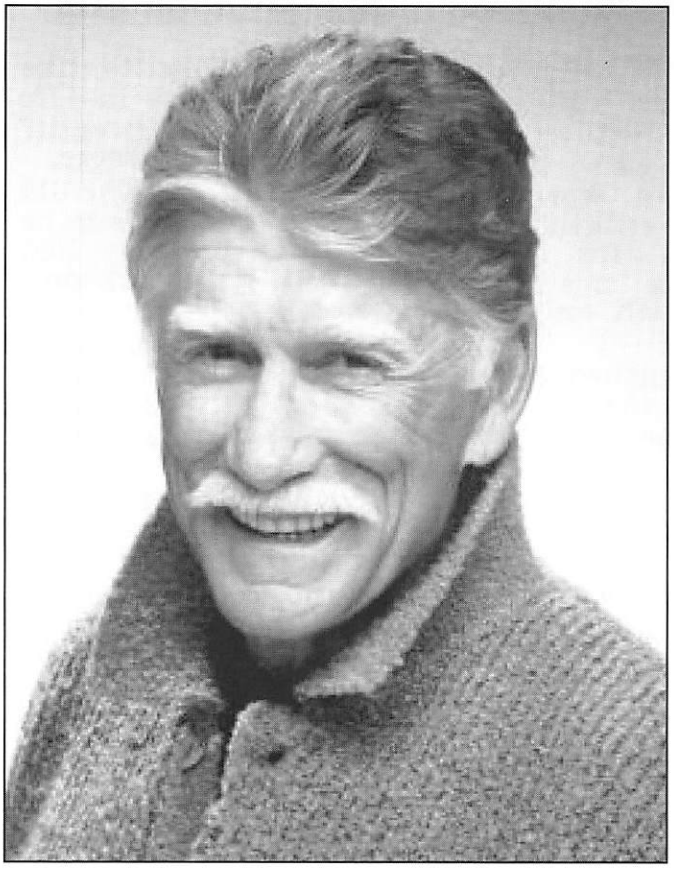
Alex Cord remembers Bing

Remember Alex Cord who played The Ringo Kid in the 1966 remake of *Stagecoach*? Well, he was interviewed some months ago by the Gainesville Daily Register in Texas. He is now 72 and he talked about *Stagecoach* to the paper and we reproduce a portion of the article here.

"Oddly, when I was offered the re-make of 'Stagecoach,' which was to play the John Wayne part of the Ringo Kid, I actually turned it down at first because I was so intimidated by the fact that it had made John Wayne a star, that it was such a classic movie. And I thought, 'I am not John Wayne,'" Cord said. "So I turned it down.

"My agent came totally unglued."

With the protests of his agent ringing in his ears, Cord did some re-thinking.



A recent photo of Alex Cord

"I had been to Africa a couple of times and fell in love with Africa and spent all my money there. And I wanted to go back to Africa," Cord said. "My main motivation, apart from the fact that my agent was gonna have a heart attack, was I felt, 'Well, if I do this movie, I'll have enough money to go back to Africa for a couple of months.' So I did - and had a great time playing the Ringo Kid and got to, again, meet some wonderful people. I got to work with Bing Crosby, Van Heflin and Slim Pickens."

This gave Cord an opportunity to do something nice for his mother.

"My mother was always a huge fan of the movies and movie stars. And her favorite entertainer in the world was Bing Crosby," Cord said.

When he told his mother, she couldn't get over the fact that her son would be working with Bing Crosby.

"We were filming near Boulder, Colorado," Cord recalled. "By then I'd become pretty friendly with Bing and I told him about my mother. I said, 'You know she thinks the sun rises and sets on you. What the Beatles are to the kids of today, you are to my mother.'" When Cord asked if Crosby would be willing to have dinner with his mother, Crosby answered, "'Oh, Alex, absolutely.' He couldn't have been more gracious," Cord recalled.

"So, I fixed it up. My mother got to have dinner with Bing Crosby. Bing just sat next to my mother and paid all the attention in the world to her. I was so thrilled to be able to do that little thing for her; it was a dream come true for her."

And it's probably something she remembers to this day. Cord's parents are both still alive. "My father is 96 and my mother is 94. And they're both as sharp as can be," he said.

What a nice story.

Bing on the Soundtrack

The recent release by Sony of the soundtrack CD from the movie *Bewitched*, starring Nicole Kidman, contains Bing's film version of 'I Love You Samantha' but a word of warning. The song is not included in the film itself. Director Nora Ephron told the Hollywood Reporter: "There were a couple of songs that we kind of knew always (we wanted to use) like the Sinatra 'Witchcraft'. I couldn't imagine making this movie without that. And the Steve Lawrence version of the 'Bewitched' theme song, which is a spectacular version with orchestrations by Don Costa, who also, of course, did a lot of work with Sinatra. And then The Talking Heads' 'And She Was.' We found a lot of stuff. And R.E.M.'s 'Everybody Hurts,' which is so funny in the movie. So it was a kind of nice mixture of old and new stuff. The only thing I really wanted to get into the movie and I didn't, which is sad, is the Bing Crosby 'I Love You Samantha' (from 'High Society'), but that's on the soundtrack."

Ah well, better than nothing!

The Big Broadcast

Martin McQuade attended the screening of *The Big Broadcast* on July 7th, at The Film Forum revival theater in West Houston Street, New York. The film was shown as part of a retrospective of Paramount films made before the introduction of the Hollywood Production code. It was on a double-bill with the 1933 movie *International House* and was introduced by Rich Conaty, who hosts the long-lasting Big Broadcast program heard on WFUV-FM in New York. Mr. Conaty plays vintage Crosby on his show every Sunday night. He remarked on the similarities shared by the real life Bing with his 'reel life' counterpart in the film. Shown three times during the day, the evening performance which Martin attended was sold-out. Martin commented that "all of Bing's musical numbers were well applauded, and his many droll moments received much laughter."

BING BOUNCES BACK

BING CROSBY is back! And yesterday the Old Groaner proved he still has plenty of zing, even at 73.

He stepped into a London recording studio and firmly waved away the usual aids.

Instead of going into a protective "vocal booth" he insisted on standing right out in front with the band.

"I'm a band singer," he said, "and I want to sing with them. That's why I came all this way."

His producer, Ken Barnes, was worried about the strength of Bing's lungs, for the singer had a major cancer operation only a year ago.

But Bing brushed him aside., "If the band get louder," he said, "I get louder."

And he did, as he went into old favourites like The Best Things in Life are Free and Breezin' Along with the Breeze.

It was just as if he did not know what it is to be 73 or to have nearly died under the surgeon's knife.

Bing, who is here to make two LPs, even asked: "What does everyone mean by a comeback ?

"I've never been away."

Bing Bounces Back!

Ken Crossland casts his mind back to the summer of 1975.

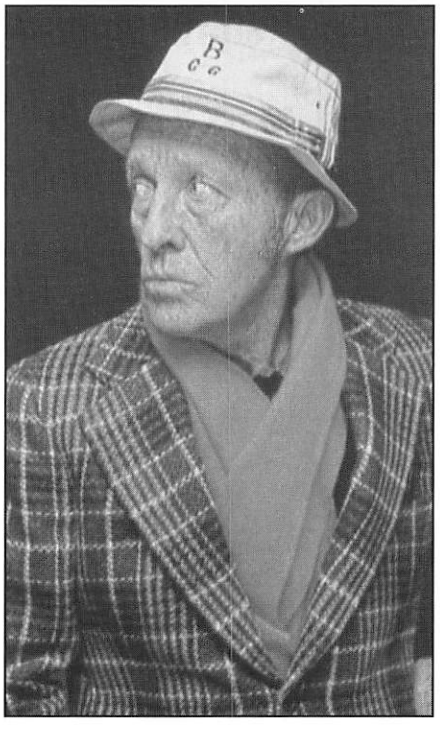
Can it really be thirty years ago? 1975 was a milestone year for me - leaving university (sad), starting real work (sadder still) and seeing Bing perform in person for the first time are three reasons why.

For a Crosby fan – particularly one still relatively new to the fold – the summer of 1975 was one of great expectation. I bought my first Bing record in 1968 and wonderful though it was to work all the way back to the early 30s, I lived in hope of a second coming from the great man. It seemed a forlorn dream. Every new TV appearance was eagerly awaited but each time, it was a shambling old man who appeared, hammy in his acting and reluctant to sing. His best days were yester and he knew it.

There was still the occasional new record and with it the occasional gem but each "Sugar Don't You Know" (from *Bing'n Basie)* had to be paid for with the shoddiness of the final note on "Put Your Hand In The Hand" and Bing's inability to get more than half way up the mountain that he was gonna build. The real frustration was that the voice was still there; what was missing was the confidence and the application.

Over Christmas 1973 it seemed that it was more than just Bing's singing days that were ending. Bing was ill and within days, his condition has become critical. The obituaries were being taken down from the printing shelves and paginated.

But suddenly, a light began to shine. Bing didn't have cancer; a tropical fungus caused his illness and whilst he lost part of a lung, he was soon back to full health. The operation would not, we were told, affect his singing, but that seemed secondary. We were all just happy that Bing was still alive.



Bing at Chappells recording studio, London, February 1975

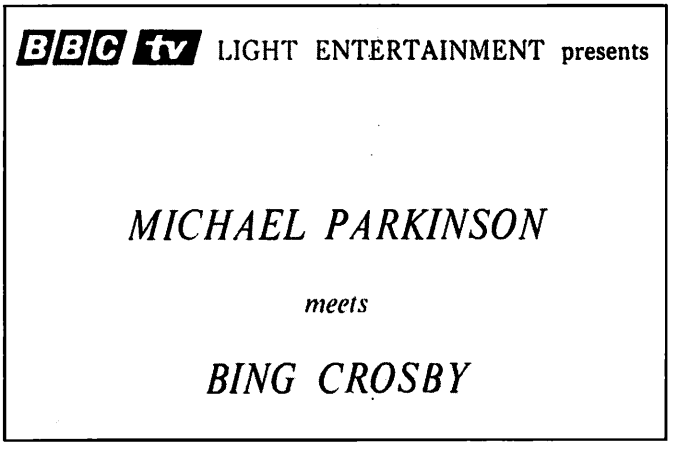
In May 1974, Bing wrote to Leslie Gaylor, confirming his recuperation and casually mentioning that he was considering an album of "Jolson songs." That letter in turn found its way to UK record producer, Ken Barnes and by time the Christmas 1974 issue of *BING* appeared, Bing had recorded two duets with Johnny Mercer, under Barnes's watchful eye. And according to Ken, he sounded good – "his tone is much rounder than on his records of the last few years and he sounds more like he used to in the 1940s" said Ken.

Bing was due in London in February 1975 to record two full albums with Barnes. The sessions – Bing's first in the UK other than an abortive session in 1960 – were big news. *"Bing Bounces Back"* said the papers, reporting how Bing had refused to sing in a vocal booth. "I'm a band singer" they quoted Bing as saying "and I want to sing with the band. That's why I came all this way".

The spring 1975 edition of *BING* offered first hand accounts of the Bond Street sessions from the lucky few ICC members who had been there. To some – me, at least – it sounded too good to be true. Bing had appeared on BBC TV's *Grandstand* sports programme during his February visit but was visibly frail. A second coming? It seemed unlikely.

It was four months before any of us heard the fruits of the February sessions. I remember the day I heard the new Bing with crystal clarity. It was 27th June. My mother was listening to Radio 2 as she always did. It was the Jean Challis programme. As I walked into the kitchen, there was a song playing that I had never heard, sung by a singer I had never heard ... or so I thought. After twenty seconds or so, it dawned on me what I was hearing. This was the much vaunted "That's What Life Is All About", a modern ballad and not at all what I had created in my head. What's more, Bing in total command of the song in a way that I had not heard on any "modern" Crosby recording. I stood entranced at the doorway. The diligence, the attention to detail, the sheer quality of the finished product were all immediately apparent. As the song, reached its crescendo, I waited for the moment of truth. Another "Ding Dong The Witch Is Dead" bum note was surely about to arrive, but it didn't. Bing hit the final note like a hammer on a nail!

Three weeks later, I got my first chance to see and hear Bing at the recording of the second of his *Parkinson* shows for the BBC. Along with a legion of other Crosby fans, we queued outside the BBC Television Studio, a theatre that had a former life as the Shepherd's Bush Empire. It was hot, sticky Friday evening in what was becoming an unusually warm summer. Finally, the doors opened.



After a brief warm up and a false start from Michael Parkinson, Bing made his entrance through the middle of the Pete Moore band and went straight into a parody of "Hello Dolly" ("Hello Parky"). I knew in an instant what people meant when they said Bing had a big voice. It simply filled the room with its power and resonance.

The old man I had grown accustomed to seeing was nowhere to be seen. Bing was tanned, his features sharp, his hairpiece as modern as it ever got and he looked immaculate in a blue blazer and light grey trousers. And did he want to sing!

Bing sang several songs from the "That's What Life Is All About" album on the *Parkinson* show and within a few weeks, the album itself was out, released on 29 August. I bought my copy from an old-fashioned music shop in Wakefield during the lunch break in my first week at work. A handsome cover, a double sleeve with an array of photos, and more to the point, 13 wonderful tracks.

There were more unexpected goodies during that summer of '75. Bing's stay in Britain was an extended one and he turned up many times on TV and radio, each time in great voice and eager to sing. Charles Thompson's biography made its first appearance and Reader's Digest issued a 6-LP set. It was the start of a golden two years that gave many of us memories to cherish for a lifetime. The summer of '76 of course set new highs with the momentous season at the Palladium, but I still look back to two moments in 1975 – first, chance encounter with the voice of the new Bing and second, the strolling player who rolled back the years in Shepherd's Bush – when dreams really did come true.

Ken Crossland

(Editor: A couple of weeks after receiving this article from Ken, I had an interesting little postscript from him:

"Little did I realise when writing that article, that I would have the chance to get a personal reminiscence on the summer of '75 from Michael Parkinson. The opportunity came when I found him sitting quietly in a bar after a round of golf at a course that I also happened to be visiting. He was surprised when I told him that the 30th anniversary of his second show with Bing was just around the corner, but very happy to chat about his experiences of working with Bing. Some of his anecdotes – Bing arriving unaccompanied, with a hat box containing his toupee, Bing's fondness for London cabs, and his ever-so-polite put down of a producer who wanted "just one more take, Mr Crosby" were familiar but when I asked him for his strongest memory of Bing, he said this: "Of all the stars I have interviewed, Bing had the smallest ego." A nice memory from an equally nice man."

And to follow on from Ken's nostalgic article what could be better than to give a little more detail of those years when Bing bounced back?)

Bing at the Beeb - Part 2

Back in December 1990, BING magazine carried an article headed 'Bing at the Beeb' describing a visit by that same Ken Crossland (then Editor of the magazine) and your current Editor to the BBC Written Archives Centre at Caversham, Reading in the UK. At that time the centre held about 100,000 contributor files relating to speakers, writers, artists, composers and entertainers engaged by the BBC plus files covering all types of programmes. The files did not contain anything beyond 1962 as it was not appropriate for business matters relating to modern day personalities to be public knowledge. We described the contents of Bing's contributor file in our original article but with the passage of time, I thought it might be worthwhile to revisit the Centre to see what else had found its way into Bing's file since then.

In a way the visit, which was on September 25, 2003, was disappointing because there was a distinct lack of the internal BBC memos which had made our previous trip so rewarding. There were however many copies of contracts and I was surprised at the low fees paid to Bing by the BBC. (The British pound was worth about US$2 at the time). He had always regarded the BBC in the same light as the PBS in the USA so he was never very demanding and often he passed the fees to charity. He did draw some fees in cash no doubt to cover his outgoings whilst in the UK and it could be that he had the BBC provide accommodation or other benefits in kind at their expense to make any transaction with them more tax efficient.

It may be helpful if I set out the new information gleaned in the same form as my book *Bing Crosby - Day By Day*. Also I have included some relevant extracts from the recent books by BBC presenter Terry Wogan and by Maggie Stredder, a singer who often formed part of a backing group for other stars and who was well known as "the girl with the glasses" in the Vernons Girls group.

1972

September 18, Monday. Bing tapes the *Parkinson* show for BBC-TV in London which is shown on December 23. Bing is paid a fee of £500 and he takes £170 of this in cash. He receives a fee of £6.50 in respect of the use of part of the interview in the BBC Radio 4 programme *Pick Of The Week* broadcast on December 29. Also he is paid a repeat fee of £50 in September 1974.

1975

February 22, Saturday. Records five more tracks with Pete Moore and his Orchestra at Chappells. Later, at around 2:20 p.m., appears on *Grandstand*, a live BBC-TV sports programme introduced by Frank Bough, and during this he places a bet on a horse called "Uncle Bing" which duly wins the 3:00 p.m. race at Kempton Park. He donates his £200 appearance fee to the National Society for Cancer Relief.

February 27, Thursday. (starting at 9:25 a.m.) Interviewed on *Pete Murray's Open House* BBC Radio Two programme in Studio B13 in Broadcasting House, London. Bing is paid a nominal £12. Later, at around 1:20 p.m., appears on the BBC-TV programme *Pebble Mill at One* and is interviewed by Donny McCloud. He donates his £20 fee to the National Society for Cancer Relief.

March 6, Thursday. Bing is back in Hillsborough and writes a short letter of thanks to Ken Barnes. BBC Radio 2 broadcasts a recent interview with Bing in their *Music Through Midnight* programme. Don Durbridge is the interviewer.

July 15, Tuesday. (10:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.) Bing records *A Couple of Song and Dance Men* album with Fred Astaire, Pete Moore and his Orchestra, and the Johnny Evans Singers at the Music Centre, Wembley.

> One lovely story, regarding another American star, was the day we arrived at the studios to discover we were to provide the vocal backing for two legendary performers who were combining their talents to produce an album - Bing Crosby and Fred Astaire. As thrilled as I was to meet and work with these showbiz greats, Joan Baxter, one of the other session singers booked for the recording, was ecstatic. "I must ring my Mum during the break for lunch" she said "and tell her who we are working with. She is a Bing Crosby fanatic and she'll just die."
>
> As soon as the midday break was called, Joan dashed to the phone and was just about to tell her Mum the news, when who should walk by, at just that moment, but the man himself. Without as much as a 'by your leave' - Joan thrust the phone into his hand and said "Bing - say hallo to my Mum - her name is Harriet". Bing, without turning

a hair, and in that very recognisable voice of his, spoke into the mouthpiece.

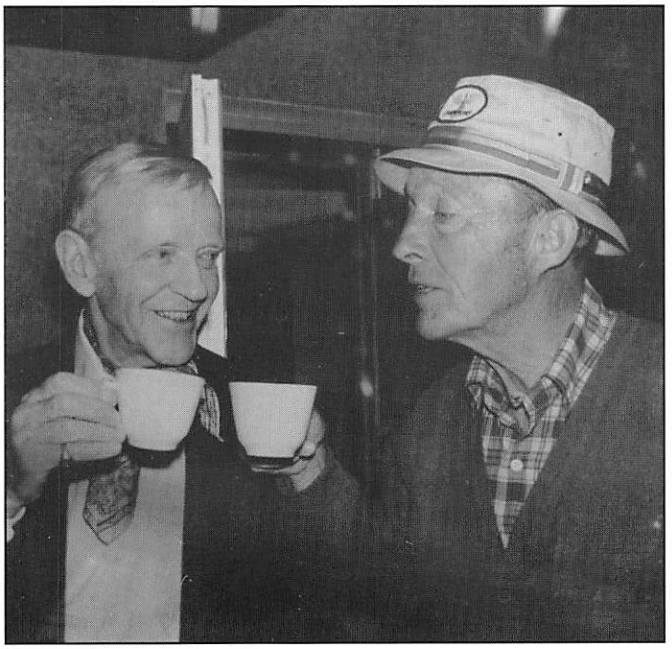
"Hi, Harriet - this is Bing Crosby. Howya doin'". For all the effect it had on Joan's mum, it could have been the local butcher. In her broad Yorkshire accent she replied "Ee - is that you Bing? Me arthritis is killing me!"

"Well honey" replied the crooner "don't you worry. You just sit yourself down with a large brandy - no, make that two large brandies - and you'll feel much better."

Joan's mum, the Bing fanatic who we felt would just die at the thought of speaking to her hero, refused even now to show her excitement or, worse still, to admit her personal worship of the man.

"Our Joan's Dad" she said "thought you were wonderful!!" Bing was unable to say another word for Harriet's phlegmatic reply struck a funny bone and he left us to enjoy his lunch, still roaring with laughter at the conversation.

(Maggie Stredder, writing in her book *The Girl With The Glasses*, pages 68-69)



Bing and Fred take tea together.

July 17, Thursday. Completes *A Couple of Song and Dance Men* album. Interviewed at his hotel by Jack De Manio for the BBC Radio4 programme *Jack De Manio Precisely*, which is actually broadcast on Wednesday, July 23 at 3:50 p.m.

July 18, Friday. (10:30 - 11:15 a.m.) Interviewed by Michael Aspel on Capital Radio. In the afternoon, tapes another *Parkinson* television show for BBC which is shown on August 30. Bing sings several songs on the Parkinson show accompanied by Pete Moore and his Orchestra. Rehearsals begin at 2:30 p.m. with the show itself starting at 6:00 p.m. Bing's fee is £300 which he takes in cash on August 18.

July 22, Tuesday. (8:00–9:00 a.m.) Appears on Terry Wogan's morning BBC Radio 2 show in London. When younger, Bing Crosby with his deceptively easy singing style and his similar gift on the big screen, had been a great favourite of mine. I could never have dreamt of meeting him, as I queued for the one-and-nines, but I did. In the early seventies, he dropped in one morning on my radio show, and we chatted. He, too, was everything I knew he would be: full of bonhomie and good humour, relaxed and generous with his time.

As I recall (and, as you have noticed, my recollections can be a bit on the misty side), Bing was in London to record an album with Fred Astaire. The word had it that the recording was not going as swimmingly as it might: Astaire was a workaholic, meticulous in everything, as in his dancing: rehearse, refine, rehearse, let's do it one more time. Crosby's style was the antithesis of Astaire's: rely on your talent, do it on your toes, wing it, let's go, I've got a golf date…

(Terry Wogan, writing in his book, *Is It Me?* pages 78/79)

July 23, Wednesday. Tapes a television appearance on the BBC programme *Top of the Pops* when he sings "That's What Life Is All About." The programme is screened on July 24. Bing's fee of £200 is paid to United Artists Records in London.

One final story of the *Top of The Pops* concerns a Party Political Broadcast from the Prime Minister at that time - Edward Heath. Mr. Heath had arrived at the BBC to record his message and found to his concern, that the studio he had been allocated, was next door to TOTPs. It so happens that, on that particular day, the bands appearing were especially loud with the exception of a live appearance from the 'Old Groaner' himself - Bing Crosby - and the Director feared a backlash from the politician. On cue, the P.M. entered the studio and in a stern voice demanded to see 'him in charge'. Visualising entombment in the Bloody Tower at least, he approached 'his prominence' in some fear.

"Are you in charge here?" shouted the great man.

"Yessir" trembled the Director "Yes - I am!" The Prime Minister leant towards him and asked

"Any chance of Bing Crosby's autograph?"

That story, I promise, you is true.

(Maggie Stredder, writing in her book *The Girl With The Glasses,* page 77)

July 25, Friday. *The Merv Griffin Show* with Bing and Rich Little as guests is shown by CBS. Meanwhile in London, Bing is interviewed by Llew Gardiner on the *Today* programme for Thames Television and this is transmitted at 6:00 p.m.. Bing lives in a rented house at 3 Aubrey Rd., London W8 (near Holland Park Avenue) during his stay in London.

July 27, Sunday. Tapes a guest appearance on the Vera Lynn BBC-TV show at the BBC-TV theatre in Shepherd's Bush in London. Bing sings "That's What Life Is All About" as well as dueting with Vera Lynn on "Sing." Bing is paid £500 and he draws this in cash on August 18. The show screens on September 24. Meanwhile, Kathryn leaves San Francisco to fly to England to rejoin her husband.

Bing and Vera get to know each other!

July 28, Monday. Is interviewed by Derek Jones for a BBC Radio 4 programme called *Sounds Natural* and Bing makes various bird calls and discusses other wildlife matters. The programme is broadcast on January 26, 1976. Bing is paid £50.

August 4, Monday. (1:00 - 2:00 p.m.) At 3 Aubrey Rd., London W8, Bing records an interview for the BBC Radio 4 programme *Wogan's World*. He is paid £75 and the programme is broadcast on September 7 at 6:15 p.m.

August 11, Monday. (9:00 - 11:00 a.m.) At 3 Aubrey Rd., Bing records a programme for BBC Radio 2 called *Bing Crosby Reminisces* which is broadcast on August 25. He is paid £100 for his services.

August 13, Wednesday. Starting at 9 a.m. at the Aubrey Rd. property, Bing records an appearance on the BBC Radio 4 programme *Desert Island Discs* and interviewed by Roy Plomley, he selects the eight gramophone records he would take if abandoned on a desert island. They are:

1. South Rampart Street Parade (Bob Crosby and his Bob Cats)
2. Clair De Lune (London Symphony Orchestra)
3. And the Angels Sing (Benny Goodman with vocal by Martha Tilton)
4. Moonlight Serenade (Glenn Miller)
5. Liebestraum (Philadelphia Orchestra)
6. Begin the Beguine (Artie Shaw)
7. Song of India (Tommy Dorsey)
8. Cavalleria Rusticana (La Scala Orchestra)

He chooses as a luxury a guitar and as a book (other than *The Bible*) he chooses *Roget's Thesaurus*. The programme is broadcast on December 27, 1975. Bing receives a fee of £60.

August 25, Monday. (12:02 - 1:00 p.m.) Bing introduces recordings in a one-hour BBC Radio 2 programme *Bing Crosby Reminisces* which has been produced by Brian Willey.

August 30, Saturday. (11:00 p.m.–12:05 a.m.) Bing's taped appearance on the BBC-TV show Parkinson is shown.

> This opening edition, directed by Stanley Appel, produced by Richard Drewett and pegged to Bing Crosby's half-century in show business, was obviously preplanned, tailored and manicured, even by chat show standards.
>
> Questions had a habit of emerging as cues for songs. Despite all the Hollywood musical brainwashing, with those "Let's Do the Show Right Here" bits attempting to prove that near-perfection can be attained off the cuff, there was no doubt that Parkinson, Crosby and the team had arranged a pleasant mixture of concert and interview.
>
> Bing sang uncannily well for a man of his years, and was as engaging a talker as ever. (Somebody's extreme poverty was indicated by "He hadn't change for a match.") And for all the Transatlantic colour, he cares about language. Complimenting Fred Astaire on unctuousness; he quickly changed it—after a verbal nudge from Parkinson—to urbanity, realising that it is kinder to accuse a friend of being suave than oily. (Shaun Usher, *Daily Mail*, September 1)

September 5, Friday. Completes the *Tom Sawyer* album at Argo Studios between 10:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. He then tapes a *Disneytime* programme for BBC-TV which is shown on December 26. The filming is done in a private house in Chiswick. Bing's fee is £250 which he takes in cash.

> This abridged version of a well-loved story is one of the most enjoyable sets to have come my way in recent years. It was a master stroke to get Bing Crosby to read it, for the 'Old Groaner' has a devastatingly charming manner, compounded of a relaxed and sympathetic delivery and a lovely speaking voice. The vocal chords that kept him at the very top in music and musical films for so many years are just as velvety now...Crosby's masterly reading needs little help. Delicate, dry, humourous but never whimsical or condescending, he is one of the most delightful readers Argo has offered us. The quality of the sound is exceptionally fine. Highly recommended.
>
> (Mary Postgate, *The Gramophone*, May, 1976)

September 7, Sunday (6:15 - 7:00 p.m.) BBC Radio 4 broadcasts an edition of *Wogan's World* in which Terry Wogan interviews Bing from "the sunny lounge of a house somewhere in London." This is the show taped on August 4.

September 24, Wednesday. Bing's taped appearance on the Vera Lynn BBC-TV show is transmitted.

. . . he looks a little thinner but his voice has lost none of its charm. He still sings with impeccable timing. He, too, knows more than a bit about sentiment. He sang about ups and downs that he said looking us straight in the eye is what life is all about. I am not keen on entertainers who pretend to be philosophers with a message. But the great ones get away with it - and Bing did. As for their voices, Bing cleverly attempts no more than he knows he can achieve. . .

(*Evening News*, unknown date)

November 21, Friday. During the morning at the KTTV studio, Bing watches Mary Frances work with Fred Astaire and then at 11:00 a.m. he tapes the "Top Billing" number with Astaire, finishing at 1:30 p.m. Leo Lynn then drives Bing to the nearby Sportsmen's Lodge where he says a few words in tribute to Ken Carpenter who is being honored with a luncheon. Bing and Leo snatch a bite of lunch at a Sambo's chain eatery. On his return to the TV studio, Bing records the Christmas carols segment with Fred Astaire and the Young Americans. During the day, Bing and his family also record a radio show for the BBC which is aired on Christmas Day in the UK as *Christmas With The Bing Crosbys*. He receives a fee of £200.

1977

September 21, Wednesday. In the London Palladium bar, Bing is interviewed for the BBC2 television programme *Tonight* by Vincent Hanna. The fee of £40 is eventually paid to Bing's executor, Richard C. Bergen.
October 11, Tuesday. Bing's London flat in Davies Street, Mayfair, has been burgled while he was in Brighton. (10:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m) After dealing with the police, Bing records eight songs with Gordon Rose and his Orchestra for a radio programme at the BBC Studios, Maida Vale, and is interviewed by Alan Dell to provide links between the songs. These are his last recordings. He is paid £150 plus repeat fees of £75.

> It is with some sadness I record that one of the high spots of my professional life should find me at the end of a long and illustrious list of Musical Directors beginning with Paul Whiteman. Whilst I never could remember a time when there was no Bing, the first time I actually met him was at the preliminary rehearsal for the three provincial dates, London Palladium fortnight and the BBC Broadcast, all of which I was contracted to do with my Orchestra, and which constituted his last professional appearances.
>
> An early reserve quickly gave way to a warmth which was always evident in the voice and film performances which I knew so well, and on learning of my interests (I played jazz guitar and trumpet) he delighted in telling me outrageous stories of the great musicians with whom he has been associated. Every evening I would hear of the unpublished exploits of such jazz greats as Louis Armstrong, Eddie Lang, Joe Venuti, Bix Beiderbecke, Frankie Trumbauer, the Dorsey Brothers etc. etc., and these stories, together with Bing's humorous turn of phrase, were unforgettable.
>
> Of Bing Crosby the artiste and of this magnificent voice, surely everything has been said, but I would like to add a small personal observation; I consider myself the most privileged of men to have worked with the greatest entertainer of this century, and am very proud that this all too short season is represented for posterity in this Album.
>
> (Gordon Rose, writing on the cover of *Bing - The Final Chapter* an LP album issued by the BBC in 1980)

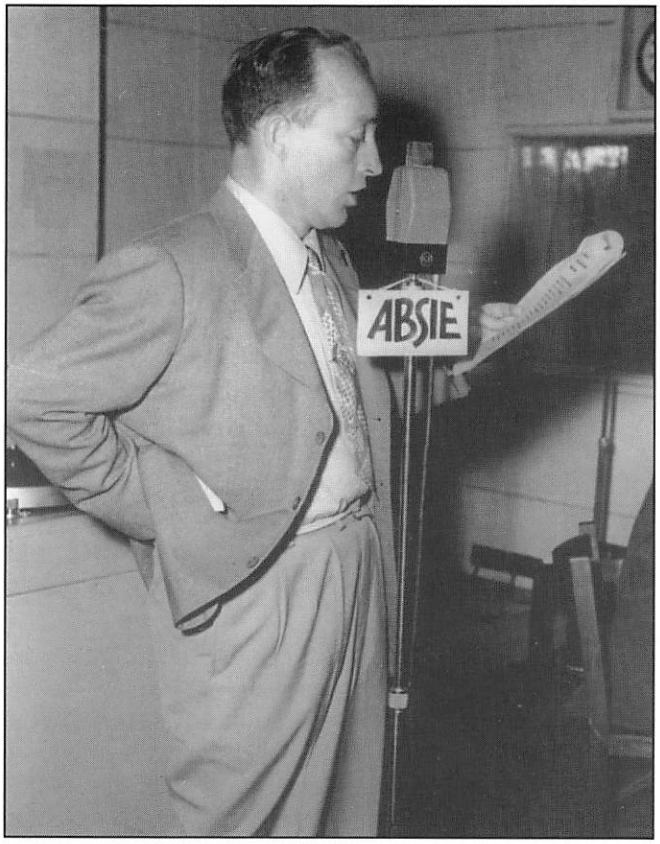
> When Gordon Rose phoned to say Bing and Rosemary Clooney would like to do a broadcast for BBC Radio, I doubted it could be arranged in the little time available, but with everyone 'pulling out all the stops' I was soon able to visit Bing at the London Palladium to discuss the music and all was arranged.
>
> Was it really true? Was this man with the magical voice, the most famous ever, turning up at our Maida Vale Studios 'with the fellas'? But true it was, and he came and sang and talked to Alan Dell and charmed everyone with his warmth and friendliness and above all his trust in all of us — strangers to him — to record what turned out to be his ultimate performance.
>
> When I listen to these songs I shall always remember him perched on a stool in his floppy hat and looking frail — but still giving with the old magic. I just could believe the lyric of the last song. Once In a While, was a message to us all — "Hoping You'll Think Of Me Once In a While" — I'll never forget.
>
> (Lawrie Monk, Producer BBC Radio 2, writing on the cover of *Bing - The Final Chapter* an LP album issued by the BBC in 1980)

****

So, some very interesting detail which helps to give us a fascinating picture of Bing's activities in the UK in his final years.

Also, whilst at the Archives Centre, I came across a book by a BBC producer called Maurice Gorham who worked with Bing during his visit to England in 1944. There's a nice Bing extract which we'll use to finish this article:

> One of the big events that shook the AEFP was the arrival of Bing Crosby in August 1944. Long before he arrived all the factions were warring over him; it became a matter of endless intrigue whether he should appear first at the Queensberry Club or the Stage Door Canteen. Bing himself was the calm spot in the centre of the whirlwind. I have never met anybody so natural and relaxed. The factions raged around the door and in the corridor, but the object of their strife seemed not to have a care in the world.
>
> He must have acquired this poise in sheer self-defence against the strain of being the biggest one-man



Bing at work on the ABSIE programme

entertainment business in the world, but it made him very easy to deal with and very nice to know.

He did everything he was asked to do, including some things that I should have thought anybody would have known better than to ask him: for instance, singing in French and German for ABSIE, and taking part in our AEFP item 'Mark Up Your Map'. This was a daily broadcast in which we told the troops where the front line was, according to the latest communiques which had often not reached them yet. Ed Kirby thought it would be a good idea to have Bing go in there one morning and sing 'Going My Way', and Bing did. It was after this broadcast that I got him up to my office to get away from the crowds, for naturally when Bing appeared, work virtually stopped in Broadcasting House. Before he left I asked him just to walk through our AEFP offices and say Hello to the girls, and he did. On the way out he was attacked by other BBC staff in search of autographs, and he remarked how nice it was that none of our girls who had met him had asked for one.

(Maurice Gorham, writing in his book *Sound & Fury - Twenty-One Years In The BBC*, page 156)

Malcolm Macfarlane

One Sweet Letter From You

Members' views, opinions and comments are always welcomed and we have great pleasure in reproducing some of the letters received since the last issue

Roger Addey, Camborne, Cornwall, UK

I have now finished the Kathryn Crosby book *My Last Years With Bing*, and have found it most enjoyable and interesting, certainly to be recommended. They both led a very full life, with an incredible amount of travel, mostly by air, to all points of the compass!

It seems that Bing was a very good shot, and although I'm not keen on killing things, they mostly seemed to provide food for the natives. What I find difficult to grasp when you look at him in his casual clothes etc., is to appreciate the wonderful singing voice, and all the tapes I have just don't seem to belong to the same man!!

I found the written word very good and Kathryn's account of the events both humorous and honest about their life together, so again well worth the read.

I feel that the book should be available in this country, as it shows just how much Bing was appreciated throughout the world, and that his talent was far greater than all the rest, put together!

Judy Schmid, Syracuse, NY, USA

I'd like to share my THANK YOU with all the members of the ICC to let them know that my last letter in BING received a terrific response. I've corresponded with Aldo Silengo, Michael Kaptanis, and Ken Crossland - and through their generosity, I've spent many a cold winter night catching up on 20+ years' worth of Bing Crosby fan magazines. These gentlemen neatly packaged and shipped dozens upon dozens of magazines for my library, and I'd like to publicly thank them! I've enjoyed so many articles, and now feel a bit of sadness at reading a glorious article authored by some terrific folks, only to read of their illnesses or passing in the subsequent issues. A bit of a 'cram course', to be sure, but it's amazing how the same themes keep popping up: Let's help Gonzaga grow and better display their Crosby collections, let's keep writing radio and television stations to clarify their (obvious) lack of information on Bing, let's keep getting together as fans and friends to keep the flame alive, and let's keep up our efforts to get more quality Bing-product out there!

Thank you again, gentlemen!

Graham Pascoe, Bathurst, NSW, Australia

I'm pressing ahead with my book on Bing and Aussie entertainment. I'm now on the mid-1950s. It was an interesting period. The number of new Crosby singles being released had declined and they weren't selling as well as some of the newer 'pop' singers were making their mark. However, plenty of Bing's records were still selling and from 1954 many Crosby LPs became available from EMI and the locally-owned Festival Records. The EMI catalogues for 1955/56 listed the records which were available to mid-1955: almost one hundred 78s on Decca and Columbia (including six Columbias which had been released in 1934 from the Brunswick sessions); twelve LPs on the Columbia and

Brunswick labels; and the Columbia LP album *Bing: A musical autobiography.* In Australia, as in USA and the United Kingdom, sales *of Bing: A musical autobiography* exceeded expectations.

In 1955 Bill Haley's 'Rock around the clock' reached our shores and Elvis Presley's 'Heartbreak hotel' the following year. We all know how they eventually, if not immediately, affected the popular music business although an un-named writer in music magazine *Tempo* in April 1956 thought that the rock 'n' roll craze had not caught on in this country.

In 1954 the first of many top-flight US artists came to Australia and that leads me to a question. Louis Armstrong toured Australia with Velma Middleton in October and November 1954 and with Middleton and Gary Crosby in April 1956. What was known as The National Film and Sound Archive, now ScreenSound, in Canberra has two 'ten-inch standard play' (that is, 78 rpm) recordings in its collection. They are not available for public access but one is a 1956 production described as 'Announcements by Bing Crosby about a forthcoming tour of Australia by Louis Armstrong and his All Stars including Gary Crosby' in April. The other has a production date of 1954 with a similar message from Bing and Louis and states that Gary would be in the tour party. It is presumed to refer to the 1954 tour on which Gary was not present. Question: Was Gary Crosby scheduled to be in the Armstrong tour of 1954 and, if so, why did he not come?

I've just finished reading a biography of Irving Berlin by Laurence Bergreen and was interested to read that in the early 1930s a director for RKO named Mark Sandrich was the first to pre-record songs before they were filmed, with the actors lip-synching to the playback of the recorded music. I wonder which Crosby movie first employed that method rather than having him sing 'in real time' during the filming?
(Editor: Some interesting points from Graham. Don Rayno's book on Paul Whiteman indicates that the musical items in 'King of Jazz' were mimed to a playback so perhaps 'Happy Feet' was the first song involving Bing. I guess that the Rhythm Boys own section was recorded 'live'. Anyone else have any thoughts on this matter?

Reading Gary Crosby's book, there doesn't seem to have been any plan for Gary Crosby to join Louis on the 1954 tour so one wonders whether the production date of the disc in question was correct. Anyone know the answer?)

Bob Halls, Stowmarket, Suffolk, UK

I became a member of the International Club Crosby just over a year ago, when to my delight I heard a reference to the club on BBC Radio 2 and realized that I was not the only person in the world that still loved Bing's music and films. I immediately got in touch with Michael Crampton, became a member and relieved him of about six bound volumes of BING magazines, calendars and other items.

My interest in Bing started at a very early age, when he was in the latter years of his career and when as a young lad, for all sorts of reasons, one being a love of the Christmas season, I discovered the seasonal songs and films of Bing. This was in the fifties and early sixties, and I scoured second-hand shops for Bing 78's, which I played on an old record player my father had made up for me, along with his copies of White Christmas and Silent Night, which became items on my top ten of personal belongings which to this day would be grabbed in the event of fire!

I am 53 now and probably in the younger category of Bing fans, although I am pleased to see that through the efforts of the club, even younger people are discovering just how important Bing was to music. I have built up a small collection of memorabilia, including the signed letter, a copy of which I have included, and I regularly scan eBay for items available worldwide. I must admit to having been caught out by fakes on the odd occasion, but hopefully most of what I have obtained are genuine articles.

My most amazing experience to date has been the chance finding of Bing's boyhood location of Spokane, and the almost spiritual association connected with it. That might seem a little over the top, but on a once in a lifetime trip to Canada and America two years ago, I hired a car in Seattle, drove thousands of miles in three weeks and stopped off in Spokane hoping to find a bed & breakfast. At this stage I had no idea where I was, and that Bing was a boy here. I had heard of the Gonzaga University, but again, no idea it was in Spokane. It was only when my partner Yasmine picked up a Spokane tour guide that I suddenly saw the reference to the Gonzaga Bing Museum and the reference to his boyhood home. My heart nearly stopped, I just could not believe that in a country the size of America, I had by chance stumbled on probably, the one place I would have chosen to visit prior to this holiday.

I cannot describe the feelings that transpired that night, and the anticipation of visiting the museum the next morning, Yasmine thought I was mad! Only I could appreciate what it meant to have spent hours in my room as a child, the impact on my life of Bing's reassuring voice, and the fact that I was actually going to see the original 'White Christmas' record, Bing's pipe and other personal items and his *Going My Way* Oscar, and actually visit the haunts and university of his early years.

The visit, for me was something which will stick in my mind all my life, and on a lovely summer's day, with not a cloud in the sky, I had my photo taken beside Bing's statue and walked, mesmerized a hundred times round the museum, which was all mine for half an hour before someone else came in. I must admit to feeling a little embarrassed walking past the guys at the Gonzaga Library reception desk, especially as I had tears running down my face. Yasmine, knowing what this meant to me, allowed me my moment, and did not make any adverse comment, even when I went back a second time with my camera!

The day was made even more complete when, after we had moved on to Canada, we stayed for a night in a wonderful little place called Kimberley, to the west of the Rockies, only to switch on the TV to find the Gonzaga tribute programme to Bing being shown that night. The whole experience was almost an answer to an unsaid prayer, divine guidance? For me yes!

I have just received my eagerly awaited Spring 2005 BING magazine, and it's that which prompted me to write this letter, which might even be reproduced in the magazine if you think it might be appropriate. I was very taken with the editorial reporting of the deaths of renowned members of the club like Lionel Pairpoint and Bert Day, people I really regret not meeting, along with those who have supported the Bing cause over the years who feature in past magazines, who sadly have passed on. But something which really grieves me is the declining number of Bing items from beloved personal collections, especially those important items which are snapped up by dealers who really have little interest in where

they end up, ridiculous prices being charged, with very little guarantee of authenticity.

I know that the club is anxious to move important items into bona fide museums like Gonzaga, and how essential that is, but I feel it is also important for real fans of Bing to try to keep their own collections of memorabilia, which might be passed on to places like Gonzaga via their will, which is my intention, hopefully not yet! I have tried to track down Bert Day's collection on eBay, as per the magazine article, but to date I cannot find any reference. Perhaps a data base might be kept of members who are willing to purchase such collections/items before their fate becomes the dubious dealer advertising them to all and sundry Certainly if any members have items, not 78's or other records, which they do want to pass on, I would be most happy to consider a purchase, especially personalised items with authentic signatures. They can rest assured that those precious items will not reach any dealer or individual not interested in preserving Bing's music and films. As can be gathered from this letter, that memory has a special place in my life.

Ken Merry, Doncaster, South Yorkshire, UK

There was a song so poignant sung by Judy Holliday 'The Party's Over' which tells of the passage of time and loss just as celebrity names have done for some time in BING magazine and names such as Lionel Pairpoint and Bert Day. It is difficult that the Present accepts it all as Past with a capital P.

It is not just Bing who is being forgotten as the whole era. If the Present Lot looked at it at all they would see through the era from the wrong end of a telescope, but then I firmly believe that they have got the wrong end of everything anyway—one of the reasons for their tunnel vision.. I suspect the Neanderthals were more cultured.

The quality of the Bing experience and the whole musical era is unique as we who have wider tastes know and continue to enjoy what has become as normal as breathing through the utility of tapes and CDs (whatever happened to radio which once played good popular music?) and although the whole experience is regarded as ancient and subterranean it will resonate through time like a good tune.

Meanwhile we who have been around a long time have had Bing's voice to warm us all the way and for a while we have been able to choose from all the phases of voice and style as the 20th Century's troubadour sang his way through the years.

There were the early 30s, then the middle and late thirties (all with the voice having subtle changes of style and timbre) and as Alan Dell once said "in the 30s Bing was the heir apparent - he was crowned in the 40s." It seems that many enthusiasts regard Bing's 40s voice as the standard Crosby voice. Then in the 50s Bing seemed to attain a second wind when the 'newer fellas' were coming along. Even in the later decades when the voice lost some of the early power the sound is very pleasant to listen to. The Longines collection 'The Songs I Love' is very nice to play often. Also we must thank the fates for those albums Bing recorded in his last years.

Even through the new time, if not 'dark' ages, they are not very bright. The new lot do not know what a musical phenomenon Bing was. The charisma of the voice will never be outshone.

Arne Fogel, Minneapolis-St. Paul, USA

Once again, the new issue of BING (#139) is splendid. An instant collector's item, and a pleasure to take to work and shirk off my regular duties for a day of Bingish enjoyment. This February marked the 20th anniversary of my presenting a weekly Crosby program on KLBB-AM 1400 radio in the Twin Cities. I believe this is the longest currently running weekly radio presentation of Bing in America. Although the station is not available on the internet, my website (www.arnefogel.com) features a weekly playlist of the most recent show's selections.

I'd love to know if there are any other weekly Bing shows in the USA currently? Any idea?

(Editor: Please tell us if any readers know of any weekly Bing shows.)

Carmela Amari, 1645 Cropsey Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11214, USA. (E-mail: elbing36@aol.com)

For the past year I've been working as a library clerk. The libraries in America now carry CD's, DVD's and Video's .If any of you fans have extra Bing CD's, DVD's, Video's and books please donate them to your local library. It's a great way to expose Bing to the public. If you do decide to donate, please email me or write and tell me what you donated. I would love to keep a list and one day send it to Malcolm to print in BING.

I've been pushing Gary Giddins' book on to the public. A woman came in the library last week looking for a good Bio to read and I suggested Gary's book "A Pocketful of Dreams". I can't wait for her to tell me what she thinks of it after she reads it.

(Editor: Nice suggestion, Carmela. The UK libraries would probably appreciate donations of CDs & DVDs too.)

Howard Crosby, on the Bing Crosby Internet Museum

It is my opinion, and I've shared this with lots of other family members, that in creating his screen persona of "Bing Crosby", Uncle Bing simply played his own Dad, my grandfather, Harry L Crosby. All the descriptions of my grandfather are a perfect fit: happy-go-lucky, carefree, whistling all the time, laid back, give you the shirt off his back, irresponsible with money, a ray of boundless optimism to all who met him.

Bing played his Dad in the movies. He had known this character all his life.

"Just Let Bing be Bing" - James Sheldon Remembers The Bing Crosby Show

Martin McQuade interviews James Sheldon, the director of Bing's sitcom series in 1964/5.

Dear Jim, I told you on the set, but I wanted to put it in writing – in all my experience, Jim, I've never worked with a nicer fella than you, or a fella more qualified in your job.

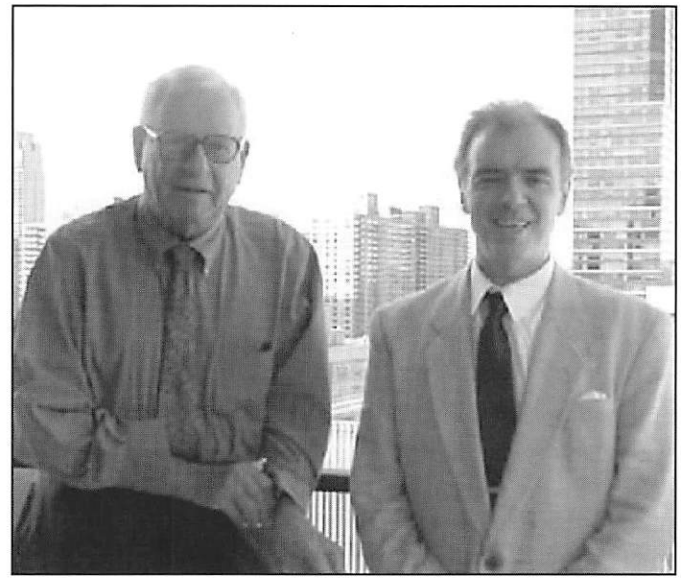
With that encomium Bing Crosby began a letter, dated January 30th, 1965, addressed from Hillsborough,

his home outside of San Francisco, to director James Sheldon upon the completion of the filming of *The Bing Crosby Show*. (The entire letter, which intersperses this article, appears on the back inside cover of the magazine.) Almost 40 years later, an opportunity presented itself to validate Bing's observation when Mr. Sheldon appeared in December, 2004 at The Donnell Library in New York as part of the 'Celebrating the Crosbys' series, which yours truly helped organize. Mr. Sheldon spoke affably after screenings at the Library of two episodes of that long ago sit-com series – so affably, in fact, that the required confidence was mustered to ask him for an interview for this periodical. He instantly obliged, and we both agreed to meet in the spring for a colloquy.

My meeting with Mr. Sheldon was preceded by a refresher course, consisting of 18 episodes of the series on videotape, and an audio tape comprised of the show's musical selections. Copies of these had already been sent to Mr. Sheldon in order to rekindle some salient recollections. This review served as a powerful reminder of just what a charming and sophisticated show it was. Research into Mr. Sheldon's massive videography yielded discoveries which overwhelmed me.

Prior to *The Bing Crosby Show*, he had directed episodes of the crème de la crème of the fabled golden age of television. Studio One, Robert Montgomery Presents, Armstrong Circle Theater, Paul Whiteman's Goodyear Revue, Mister Peepers, Dick Powell's Zane Grey Theater, Gunsmoke, The Millionaire, Richard Diamond, Desilu Playhouse, Perry Mason, Wagon Train, My Three Sons, The Twilight Zone, Naked City, Route 66, The Defenders, My Three Sons, The Twilight Zone, Naked City, Route 66, The Defenders, My Three Sons, The Alfred Hitchcock Hour, The Virginian, Death Valley Days, The Fugitive, Petticoat Junction, Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color – these were just a few of the impressive credits in his extensive résumé. Additionally, Mr. Sheldon had guided such acting legends as Paul Newman, Clint Eastwood, Gene Hackman, Burt Reynolds, and Lee Remick as they embarked on their careers. He especially enjoyed a close personal and professional relationship with James Dean, and directed him in two television dramas in the early fifties which helped start his incendiary career. Keen anticipation overcame me at the prospect of getting acquainted with a genuine television pioneer.

On a sparkling New York afternoon in mid-May, Mr. Sheldon greeted and then ushered me into his aerie overlooking Lincoln Center. He is a very vigorous gentleman, yet possessed of a calm and distinguished demeanor, and a supreme talent to put one at ease. The gin and tonic he provided helped immeasurably. His refreshing candor, as well as his spry and lucid intellect became immediately apparent. His apartment is a bibliophile's dream. It was hard to resist the impulse to rummage through his shelves of books, so appealingly arrayed on the perimeter of the sitting room where the interview was conducted. This inclination was, by necessity, held in check. Before our discussion began in earnest, Mr. Sheldon thought that we should take in the sights from his terrace. This was a rare treat, indeed.



James Sheldon (left) with Martin in his aerie. (Photo by Patti Dey)

From that awesome vantage, we were able to survey a magnificent tableau some 17 stories below: a black-tie, late afternoon alfresco reception for ABC top brass taking place on the Lincoln Center Plaza. After absorbing this elegant display of Manhattan splendor, our session commenced with my playing for Mr. Sheldon a tape consisting of comments made by Bing concerning the series: his early 1965 British fan club message, which addresses the arduous demands of this new enterprise, and his appearance on the ABC Fall Preview Show for the fall 1964-65 season in which he introduced his new series, describing its origin and premise. Mr. Sheldon was subjected to these arcana in order to arouse memories of this distant period of his prolific career. A very stimulating conversation ensued.

He informed me that he is a native New Yorker born in 1920, who, after four years as an English major at the University of North Carolina, went to work at NBC at Rockefeller Center in 1941. He soon graduated to the network's International Division, announcing news programs to servicemen overseas, as well as some disc jockeying. At war's end, he became an assistant radio director at ABC.

"My big break came in 1948 when I was staging *We the People* on radio in New York. CBS decided to televise it and I was asked to direct. My colleague, Ralph Levy, who would later direct for Jack Benny and Burns and Allen, was assigned to handle the cameras. I later took over the camera work since Ralph wanted to direct. He taught me all about this facet of production. It was the first commercial network program to be nationally

telecast at a time when there were only 500,000 TV sets in the country."

It was also the first regularly scheduled series to be simulcast on both network radio and television. Mr. Sheldon would soon experience, explore, and master the flood of technological changes which would transform the infant medium into a pervasive and powerful means of communication.

Your patience is inexhaustible. I can't recall any time on the set where you ever exhibited any signs of falling apart, blowing up, or taking a walk – and you had many situations where such behavior would have been justifiable. Tremendous control, old boy!

In 1964, after hosting many specials and guest spots, and having just launched *The Hollywood Palace*, Bing was ready to undergo the rigors of a weekly television series. When Bing was approached by Steven Gethers, the producer of the hit show *The Farmer's Daughter,* to play Bing Collins, former vaudevillian, part time engineer/college consultant/, and full time husband and father, in a weekly situation comedy, he soon acquiesced. The concept of a suburban family man undergoing the trials and tribulations of marriage and parenthood held a personal appeal for him. Bing also admired *The Farmer's Daughter*, which starred Inger Stevens, his co-star in *Man on Fire*. The show would be made under the aegis of Bing Crosby Productions, and broadcast on ABC. James Sheldon, who was then at his peak of professional success, was asked to direct.

"I was having a good period. You could say that I was 'hot.' I had just directed episodes of The Twilight Zone (including the connoisseur's favorite, 'Long Distance Call' starring Billy Mumy, the last videotaped show of this landmark series) and The Alfred Hitchcock Hour, as well as 13 episodes of both The Naked City and Route 66. I had been away a lot on location, so when my agent, George Rosenberg, who was also Bing's agent, asked me to direct *The Bing Crosby Show* on a trial basis of four to six shows, I instantly agreed. I had been out on location a lot, away from Los Angeles where I lived, working around the clock and all around the country, so I was happy to be in one place for a while."

He was placed under contract to Bing Crosby Productions. It is obvious that Bing approved of his efforts since the trial period transcended into the entire 28 episode run of the series. This was facilitated by Mr. Sheldon not having any concurrent directorial commitments.

Because of Crosby's star power there was no need for a pilot. When Mr. Sheldon came on board as director, the cast and crew had already been assembled. He had never worked with Bing before, and he soon realized what a joy it was to direct him. "He generally enjoyed his work. He was very cooperative and never late, and always thoroughly prepared. He was truly a class operation." There naturally would be a script reading and a rehearsal before each shoot began. "We would never over-rehearse. That ruins the energy, especially with the kids."

My notes contained some Bingisms from the scripts which were imparted to Mr. Sheldon: one was "loose as ashes" and another "stop giving me that halibut eye." He recalled, "Of course, those could only have come from Bing. Once Bing would read the script, he would incorporate his own ad-libs."

He quickly learned that the best way to direct Bing was to just keep him happy. "Just let Bing be Bing! How do you tell Bing Crosby how to act or sing?" He related a revealing anecdote to illustrate what he meant.

"I was directing George C. Scott in an episode of The Virginian. He played a grade school teacher. In one scene, his students are being held hostage by gunmen. George had to read The Ballad of Reading Gaol by Oscar Wilde to quiet the heavies. During the rehearsal, I felt he was overacting a wee bit so I suggested with my hand, indicating 'less is more.' Mr. Scott reacted 'What kind of direction is that?' I replied, 'You're a director, George. What would you say?' He thought and said, 'Don't let the children see how upset you are.' Well, that would not have happened with Bing. It wasn't in his vocabulary to be a method actor. The gesture would have indicated enough."

He continued, "There was never a hint of strife on *The Bing Crosby Show*. We always broke early because of the youngsters on the show. Bing didn't like to work too late, anyway." Was there ever an attempt to film the show with a live audience? "No. Most sit-coms of that time were done on film."

I had a great time just because of the fact that you were at the helm, and in spite of my bursitis problems.

Mr. Sheldon revealed a practice that guaranteed harmony on the set.

"John Scott Trotter, the music director for the series, suggested that a piano player be ever present on the set. So if Bing would ever get bored or down, if things ever got too quiet, if his energy level would ebb, or if he became frustrated because a script didn't arrive until the last minute, there would always be the sound of the piano not too far away. Once Bing heard the music, he would become revitalized." The piano was played by a staff pianist at Desilu studios, where the series was filmed. "It became the talk around the lot that there was always 'a cocktail party without booze' on the set!"

The series is especially noteworthy for the Crosby vocals which would adorn each episode. The variety of the songs is impressive, ranging from Gilbert and Sullivan to Duke Ellington, from the plaintive 'Japanese Sandman' to the rollicking 'Kansas City'. Mr. Sheldon

shed much light on this aspect of the series.

"All the musical numbers were directly recorded live on the set – there was not enough time to do otherwise. Bing preferred it that way. There were never any elaborate production numbers with different angles requiring matching shots, so they were easy to do." Mr. Sheldon indicated that there was never an orchestra on the set. Mr. Trotter's incidental music would be added after filming. There was just pianist Buddy Cole's small combo.

Who replaced Buddy Cole after his untimely demise during production on November 5th, 1964? Mr. Sheldon thought that it may have been the aforementioned staff pianist. He could not recall if Mr. Cole had been ailing.

Did Bing personally select the songs? Mr. Sheldon didn't think so, but imagined that Bing must have approved them. We both noted how well the songs were integrated into each installment, 'In a Shanty in Old Shanty Town' sung en famille in *The Image* perfectly underscoring the point. Mr. Sheldon and John Scott Trotter became good friends during production. "He was a wonderful guy, very jovial. I had dinner in his apartment in West Hollywood, not far from where I lived. It was in an old Spanish building, very neat, with everything in place. Not like Bing!"

John Scott Trotter and Bing raise their voices in song with guest George Gobel prior to filming of The Image.

Kathryn Crosby had once told me that one of the incentives which prompted Bing to commit to the show was a promise made by the network that *The Bing Crosby Show* would follow an economy measure which was employed on My Three Sons, benefiting its star, Fred MacMurray. Could Mr. Sheldon expand on that?

"Yes. On My Three Sons, Don Fedderson, the producer, made a deal with MacMurray, allowing him to work only 13 weeks a season, rather than the normal 39 weeks. James V. Kern was the director and when he died in 1966, Gene Reynolds took over until I got the job. All of Fred's scenes, master shots, and close-ups for all the scripts were finished in 13 weeks. It took planning, but it was accomplished. The rest of the cast did their close-ups and scenes without Fred and the editor put all of the coverage together. Naturally, Fred's off-stage voice would need to be over-dubbed. It was a unique plan, and it worked! This was not used for Bing – he talked about it, but we both realized it would become too complicated because of the musical demands. Bing was there for every episode, despite the pain in his shoulder caused by his bursitis. Incidentally, I utilized this practice successfully with Brian Keith on Family Affair."

With all this wild, semi-pornographic type of thing that audiences are viewing nowadays, it's not conceivable they're going to have much of an appetite for our gentle, casual stories.

Beverly Garland was chosen by producer Steven Gethers to play Bing's wife, Ellie. Mr. Gethers had worked favorably with her on an episode of *The Farmer's Daughter*. Mr. Sheldon was read a statement made by Ms. Garland which appears on her website.

"He was a very easy, relaxed man to work with. However, he was also very undemonstrative. When I got the part in the series, the director and the producers said to me, 'This has got to look like a really happily married couple, but Bing is not going to be affectionate. So you're the one that's going to put your arms around him and kiss him, and just you alone are going to have to show this affection because Bing isn't going to do this.' So, that was my job."

Mr. Sheldon, who had worked several times with Ms. Garland prior to the series, denied ever making such an appeal. "Bing may have downplayed demonstrativeness, but he was always friendly and warm. I never experienced any problems along that line." He concurred with my observation that there is a strong sexual undercurrent and a palpable intimacy at play in many of the scenes involving Bing and Beverly Garland. In one particular episode, Bing is so frisky that he slaps his wife's derriere! Another contention by Ms. Garland was cited. She claims that Bing opposed the use of a double bed on the set, and maintains that he insisted on 2 single beds, one along one wall, the other along another wall, with the headboards meeting in a right angle at a night table. She writes, "I don't know of any married couple who sleeps like that! I thought it was kind of crazy but that's what Bing wanted so that's what we had."

Bing and Beverly Garland.

Mr. Sheldon could not remember if Bing demanded the unusual bed placement, but he disputed Ms. Garland's contention that Bing was responsible for the single beds. He explained, "In those days, all sit-com couples slept on single beds. It was *de rigueur*. There was absolutely no alternative to a single bed. This was absolutely not Bing's decision."

Well, in any case, we closed on a high point – with Pamela Curran on the set, didn't we?

Mr. Sheldon had great affection for Frank McHugh, who played Willie, the household handyman who had been Bing's WW2 companion. "We got along fine. Frank was a delight. I loved working with him. He was always ready. There was very little reason for him to be there, but Bing and he were buddies. They were in *Going My Way* together. Frank was very much accepted."

Mr. Sheldon remembered the pleasure of directing Carol Faylen and Diane Sherry, who played Bing's daughters, respectively, Janice the rambunctious teenager, and Joyce, the pre-teen all-purpose savant. "We had a very good time together. Bing liked the children very much. Diane's mother was a true stage mother, but not oppressively so, like some others I've known, although she was on the set regularly. Everyone got along extremely well. It was such a fun show." Was Mr. Sheldon aware that Carol Faylen was the daughter of Frank Faylen, Bing's co-star in *Blue Skies*, *Welcome Stranger* and *Road to Rio*? He was not, and has no memories of Mr. Faylen visiting the set.

A recurring character on the program was Clarissa Roberts, the best friend of older daughter Janice. She was played by Pamela Austin and is prominently featured in the episode entitled, *Are Parents People*. "Bing liked her a lot. He thought that she was quite attractive." Pamela Austin had already appeared in *Critic's Choice* as the daughter of Bob Hope and Lucille Ball, as well as *Blue Hawaii* and *Kissin' Cousins* with Elvis Presley. She had also gained fame as the girl in the Dodge Rebellion TV commercials and would go on to star as the eponymous heroine in *The Perils of Pauline*, made in 1967, co-starring Pat Boone.

Bing referred in his letter to another Pamela who frequented the set. Pamela Curran was a current TV ingénue who would go on to appear in a *Hogan's Heroes* episode. She apparently made an impression! On a few episodes, Janice's boyfriend was played by Roger Ewing. Mr. Sheldon remembered that he went on to star in Gunsmoke. Kathy Garver, who played Cissy on Family Affair, was featured as Janice's friend on the episode entitled *Exactly Like Who*? "I remember Kathy well. Shortly after the Crosby series, I directed the pilot for Family Affair."

Gary Crosby appeared on two episodes, *Exactly Like Who?* and *The Dominant Male*. In both, he played Don, another of Janice's beaus.

"Gary and I became friends. I went out for dinner with him and his wife, who was kind of flashy, one night. He wanted to work with me on other shows, but we never got around to it. I thought that he was a very nice fellow. I was so surprised when Gary's book, 'Going My Own Way', came out. Bing and Gary seemed to get along so well. They had a terrific rapport. I remember them sitting around the piano and chatting. They were very friendly. It was apparent that they had a very warm relationship. Bing was quite fond of him." He mentioned that his dear friend Judy Lewis, the daughter of Clark Gable and Loretta Young, thought very highly of the Crosby boys and became quite upset when Gary's tome was published. In fact, there was a photo of Mr. Sheldon and Ms. Lewis together on display on the shelf behind the couch where we sat for the interview.

Regarding the other Crosby, who appeared on the episode entitled *The Image,* Mr. Sheldon recollected having directed Kathryn on an episode of The Millionaire. "Bing was delighted to work with her. He was obviously proud of her. Kathryn would frequent the set along with their young daughter, Mary Frances."

With regards to an unofficial member of Crosby's family, Phil Harris, who appeared on the episode *One for the Birds,* Mr. Sheldon remarked, "I remember the two of them always singing in between shots around the piano. I can see Phil's smiling face even now! I encouraged them to rehearse their lines between themselves. It was always a question of keeping the

actors contented and the mood light." How were the intricate shots involving the blackbird handled in that episode? "The bird shots were set up in advance, with an extra camera to catch the close-ups of the bird."

Bing and Gary in Exactly Like Who?

Mr. Sheldon developed a close bond with Mel Tormé, who appeared in the episode, *Moonlighting Becomes You*. "The first time we met was on that show. We soon became good friends. I think Mel would rather have acted than sung. Later I directed him in The Virginian when Mel was in between wives." Mr. Sheldon was already acquainted with Ken Murray when he appeared in the installment, *Are Parents People*. "I had directed him in a Death Valley Days episode." He had known Arthur Franz, who appears in *The Gifted Child* episode, when they were pages together at NBC in the early forties.

He could not recall too many of Bing's interactions with his fellow stars. One, however, did stand out. Mr. Sheldon thought that Joan Fontaine and Bing worked very harmoniously together while filming the episode, *Operation Man Save*. "They appeared very relaxed, comfortable, and familiar with each other. They also seemed to have a lot of fun together, and Joan was normally aggressive." This surprised me since Ms. Fontaine had reported that she did not have pleasant memories of working with Bing in *The Emperor Waltz*, 18 years earlier. We both agreed that either this had not been the case, or that the intervening years had softened her regard for him.

It seems that the caliber of guests improved as the season wore on. Was this part of an overhaul in order to improve the weak ratings? Mr. Sheldon could not confirm this, but he did not think that Bing had any significant say in the guest selections. Other members of the co-star roster were named to trigger some reflections: Glenda Farrell, Elizabeth Frazer, Iris Adrian, Ruth Roman, Vicki Carr, James Shigeta, Jimmy Boyd, Dennis Day, Thomas Gomez, George Gobel, Frankie Avalon, Pat Harrington, Jr., David Wayne, Macdonald Carey, Lloyd Nolan, Paul Hartman, The Wellingtons, The Mitchell Boys Choir, but no memories were elicited from this litany. Mr. Sheldon did say that he liked Eddie Quillan, who appeared on the very first episode, *A Fine Romance*, aired on January 14th, 1964. When Mr. Sheldon heard me utter the name of Ulla Jacobsson, the sultry blonde freethinker in a most provocative entry, *A Fresh Bit of Danish*, a wistful smile seemed to cross his lips.

Macdonald Carey was the guest star for "The Education of Bing Collins" episode.

Of all the episodes, one particularly shines in Mr. Sheldon's memory. That is *The Christmas Show*, broadcast on December 21st, 1964. This is the most elusive example of the series. Nobody seems to have this episode on videotape in their collections. He remembered, "It was the only one in color. There was no possibility of other shows being filmed in color. Nobody except Disney had color. There was no compatible color – it was too expensive a process." *The Christmas Show* also remains a highpoint for Mr. Sheldon since it contained seven musical numbers, more than any other episode. Several of them called for Bing to dance.

"I told Bing, 'You got to get a choreographer.' Bing thought that would entail too much work. I replied, 'I certainly can't dance.' Bing responded, 'Yes, you dance

like you got a broom up your ass, but you make me look good.' Well, in spite of this acknowledgement, I wound up choreographing the numbers. Although generally, Bing would make up his own dance moves. As with all the shows, the Christmas songs were done live on the set. I don't recall any playbacks."

Bing is seen driving a Ford car in many episodes. "That was part of a special deal with Ford, part of the merchandising, since Ford was one of the sponsors." Mr. Sheldon recalled that Bing also had a deal with Botany 500, which furnished his clothing. They received a credit at the end of each show. What about some of the production credit names? "Sheldon Schrager, the assistant director, went on to become a vice president of Columbia Pictures, and Jack Scher, the associate producer, worked on some of the Road pictures. Jack was in charge of script re-writes. He was always there to help."

Did he have any memory of the blooper compilation which Mr. Gethers fashioned after production ended? He did not. Mr. Sheldon recalled directing the end credits for the series, during which Bing sings Van Heusen and Cahn's 'It All Adds Up', but did not think he had a hand in the opening credit sequence, in which Bing performs 'There's More to Life than Just Living', written by the same team He was not aware of *The Hollywood Palace* of January 16th, 1965, a glorified advert for the series, starring Bing, Beverly Garland, and Frank McHugh, which even opens with that opening tune, nor did he direct Bing's appearance on the aforementioned ABC Fall Preview Show.

Did some of Bing's other contemporary endeavors, such as the Pebble Beach Golf Tournament, held in January, or The Hollywood Palace, interfere with the series? Mr. Sheldon did not think so. Had Mr. Sheldon directed Bob Hope? "No, unfortunately."

The way the trend is going it's conceivable that Norman Mailer and Tennessee Williams and fellas of that stamp will soon be doing all the writing.

Mr. Sheldon remembered Lucille Ball visiting the set on a few occasions. "We used the Desilu studios for the Crosby show. I was no stranger to Desilu. I was quite at home there. I directed about 15 shows there at different times. Lucy and Desi's offices were there. Even the editing was done there."

Was Mr. Sheldon involved in the elliptical editing, the many montage sequences and fancy transitions abundant in the series? "The Crosby show was typical of the new, slick type of editing which became fashionable in the early sixties, but I had nothing to do with the post-production."

What about the household set in the series? Some fans speculate that it may be the same set used as the Connecticut country house seen in the last years of *I Love Lucy*. Mr. Sheldon did not think so. He did, however, express the wish that the series would have taken a cue from the Lucy shows and indulged in more physical humor. "The show needed a spark. Bing was a natural comedian. Lucy, by the way, was not. She was very serious off the set. However, she always knew where the jokes were. Her writers made her hilarious. When *Alice*, which I was directing in the mid-seventies, was foundering, I suggested that Lucy's writers be hired. Linda Lavin, our star, was a wonderful actress, but not a true comic. The producers took my advice, and then the show took off. The writers for the Crosby show weren't comedy writers, per se."

One of the best episodes of the series, in my estimation, is *Bugged by the Love Bugs*, which was written by Bing's long time comedy writer, Bill Morrow. It has loads of slapstick; most notably when Bing, in one of his most energetic moments in the series, is trampled by screaming fans of The Standells, a current rock n' roll band, in an hysterical send-up of the then current teen-idol craze. Although he had no memory of that particular show, Mr. Sheldon thought that Mr. Morrow would have accounted for it being an outstanding one.

"In any event, the Crosby series was too quiet, not really a comedy, and certainly not a drama. It revolved around the basic situation of a happy family - a sweet, homey show, echoing Bing's own life. Regrettably, those kinds of shows were falling out of favor at the time." Although the series did address some of the creeping cultural changes of the early sixties, for example, *The Liberated Woman* episode with its feminist story line, we were in accord that it was too little, too late.

As far as the series is concerned, I don't think we made a single episode that we have to be ashamed of or worried about. I just got into that type of thing about five or six years too late.

Did Mr. Sheldon remember when the series was terminated? "I don't remember when the show was cancelled. Perhaps at the end of the season, perhaps afterwards." Mrs. Crosby had told me that ABC wanted Bing to do another season, but he declined, due to the heavy work load. "I would not doubt it. I would think that, considering Bing's magnitude, the network would not have dropped the series unless Bing approved. He was complaining a lot about his bursitis. In any event, I don't think I would have committed to a second season. I know that no plans had been made for another season." The show ended 77th in the Nielsen ratings with an overall average of 14.9. Was Bing disappointed about the show's poor ranking? "I think that Bing was. I was disappointed that the series was never rerun in the United States once the last first-run episode was broadcast." That was on April 19th, 1965. "The writing was on the wall. The times were indeed changing." He bemoaned the fact that he never received one penny in

residuals from the show.

I do hope we can get together on a film sometime- any one of the projects we discussed should be definite possibilities.

Mr. Sheldon directed a pilot for Bing Crosby Productions in 1965. It was called Thompson's Ghost, starring Bert Lahr. It didn't go anywhere. He has been trying to locate a tape of it, to no avail. Bing and he did wish to make a musical film version of Robert Sherwood's play, Idiots Delight with Ingrid Bergman.

"I thought it would make a great vehicle for Bing and Ingrid. It had been filmed in 1939 by MGM with Clark Gable and Norma Shearer. We thought that MGM's rights had expired, but they hadn't because the movie was not released in Europe until after the war. So it was not to be. I never had another opportunity to work again with Bing, and our paths never again would cross. However, he left me an extra special legacy. Bing once said to me on the set, 'We're behind schedule.' I was puzzled by this. 'Why do you say that, Bing?' 'Well, you smoke a lot, and when you do, I know we are behind schedule.' I haven't smoked in the forty years since because of that off-the-cuff statement. For that, I will be eternally grateful to Bing."

Mr. Sheldon's career continued to flourish after parting with Bing. Although he would never direct a feature film, he went on to direct for a host of hit series, among them: The Man From Uncle; My Mother The Car; Batman; That Girl; Ironside; Julia; Room 222; Love, American Style; Owen Marshal, Counselor at Law; McMillan and Wife; Sanford and Son; The Waltons; M*A*S*H; James at 15; The Love Boat; The Dukes of Hazzard; Knots Landing; Cagney and Lacey; and The Equalizer, just to name a few. The robust Mr. Sheldon keeps busy appearing at symposia, and lecturing on cruise ships, regaling audiences about the halcyon days of TV. He has been interviewed by Gary Giddins for his anticipated second volume of the Crosby biography.

He shared with me that he is working on his memoirs and he is hopeful that they will be published in the near future. It is such a remarkable testimonial that, considering all of his illustrious credits, it is the unassuming *The Bing Crosby Show* which summons the most harmonious reminiscences and evokes the most contented reflections from Mr. Sheldon. "I adored working with Bing. It was like a vacation for me. It was one of the most pleasurable experiences of my life. It was so tremendously enjoyable for both Bing and me. Maybe that is why I don't have a host of vivid memories, like I do for some other more trying series. For that, I apologize." Mr. Sheldon had plans to attend a production of Cyrano de Bergerac later that evening at The Metropolitan Opera, so our informative encounter had to end. He promised to attend the opening of the forthcoming Crosby film retrospective at Lincoln Center, and with that, we bid goodbye. He left me lingering on that final expression of regret. No apology needed, Mr. Sheldon. You had just incisively revived for me a most enchanting and captivating chapter in the life of Bing Crosby.

Hope to see you again, Jim, either here or on the coast.
Always your friend, Bing.

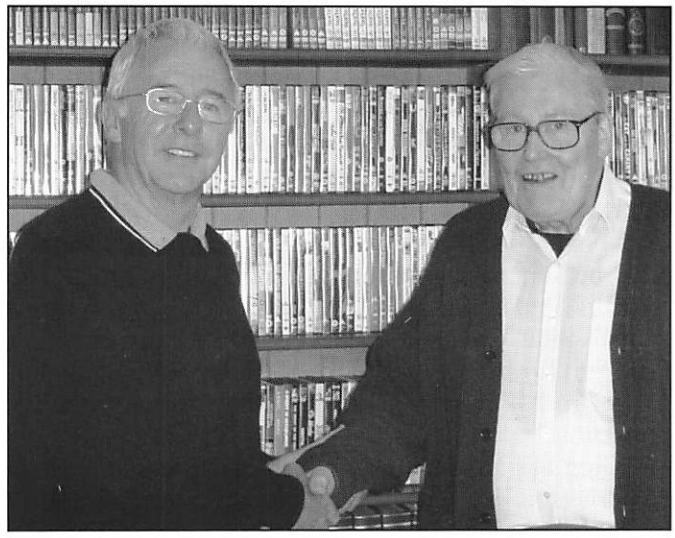
* My gratitude is extended to Malcolm Macfarlane for assisting me with the questions for this interview, and for providing valuable research.

Martin McQuade

Editor to Editor

When The British Bing Club was launched in 1950, the first three issues of the club magazine - *Crosbyana* - were edited by Art Allen and then in January 1951 all club officers received a missive telling them that Art had to step down as Editor and that **Reg Davis** would be taking over. Reg headed his editorial page as "Ain't Doin' Bad Doin' Nothin'" which must have been a gross understatement and eventually in the July-August 1951 edition, Reg announced that his good friend Geoff Milne was going to assist him. In 1952, the magazine was edited jointly by Reg and Geoff until April 1953 when Art Allen returned to the fray and the club changed its name to The Crosby Society and the magazine was renamed *Crosby Post*.

So all very interesting but why have I suddenly decided to look at Reg's work? Well, I met Reg recently and found him charming, friendly and still a Crosby man at heart.



The Editor for 2005 (left) meets the Editor for 1951.

Reg Davis had a laid-back style and many of his editorials contained an apology for the late arrival of the

magazine. I particularly liked this excuse in the first issue of 1952.

Since it is normal for devout persons to abstain from something or other during Lent, and as the editors feel sure that the members would all prefer to be classed in that category, we decided that the members would prefer not to receive a copy of this magazine during Lent but instead would rather receive it as our Easter offering

The Christmas 1951 editorial made me smile too.

Horror of horrors, Christmas is already upon us with its attendant confusion and chaos: it finds two harassed editors knee deep in paper and dripping with duplicating ink, fighting against the clock and generally working like company directors who have just been threatened with nationalisation. However we have succeeded in producing some results and now it is up to the GPO to ensure that once again you will be able to while away a pleasant five minutes over this issue before returning it to the salvage heap from whence it came.

Lovely stuff! We owe a huge debt to Reg Davis and his various colleagues for the groundwork they laid in those far off years.

Malcolm Macfarlane

BING ON THE BOX

Being a tri-annual magazine means that the three major dates with which Bing is now associated feature prominently in this periodical. The remembrance of his passing occurs in the Winter issue, Christmas is covered in the Spring publication and his birthday features in this, the Summer edition. I'm sure that even if BING magazine were a monthly we would have no problem in finding a significant occasion relating to his life and times. However, it is to the anniversary of his 102nd birthday we look this time around.

UK films in May covered several Road To.... flicks, namely *Zanzibar, Utopia, Rio* and *Bali*. All these courtesy of Sky Cinema with each being screened several times over. While in the USA a positive Bing film-fest ran through April-May with the Turner Classic Movie Channel way out in front with HBO, Fox, AMC and Cinemax all making their contributions as the later listings will show. But a film is a film after all which most of us will have seen several times over. What is of greater interest are the radio programmes where an individual slant is put on the content usually by the dedicated but quite often by presenters themselves.

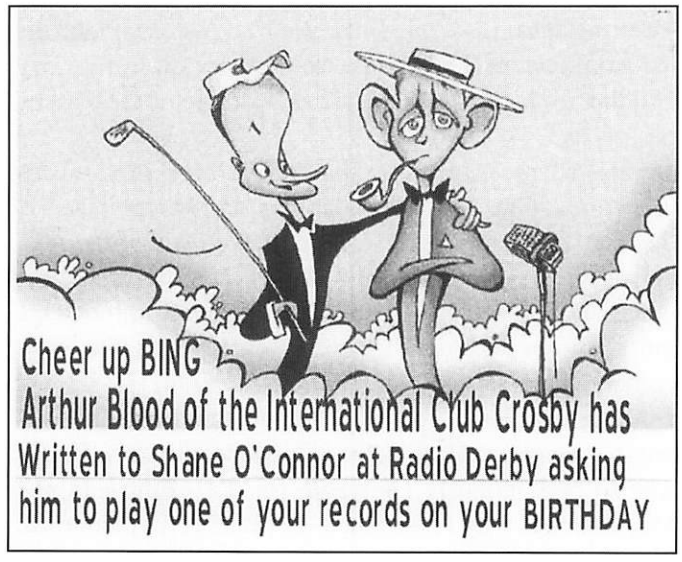
The Bing Crosby Internet Museum is a good place to find out not just what's been happening but also what may lie ahead. A posting from Greg Van Beek read as follows:

"For those in the southeastern Wisconsin listening area, be sure to tune into station WJUB 1420AM The Breeze (Plymouth, WI) for Dave Hendrickson's 3rd annual Bing Crosby Birthday Bash Tuesday morning [3rd May] from 5-9am. Four solid hours of nothing but Bing Crosby music, including some rarities from my collection."

Greg has already described in his article how Dave Hendrickson interviewed him, on tape, for the show in his Crosby room late last April. I haven't had the pleasure of hearing this broadcast myself as, unfortunately, WJUB doesn't offer streaming audio on the net yet, but well done, Greg!

DERBY WINNER

Bing was the subject of a Radio Derby twenty minute special in the UK when Arthur Blood was the short notice, studio guest of Shane O'Connor on Bing's 102nd birthday at ten o'clock that morning. The interview tee'd off with 'Straight Down The Middle' before Shane asked how Arthur came to be such a massive fan. Well, of course, as far as Arthur is concerned it's the voice; the tone – brilliant! You don't get artistes like him anymore, thought Shane, noting that Bing was a singer, a great golfer – "Nine holes in one!" interjected Arthur – fisherman and great actor as well! Arthur related the anecdote of the night when Bing lost out on a second Oscar to Marlon Brando and was pulled over on the way home for a minor motoring offence. The traffic cop let him off with a warning when he saw who it was, saying: "You've had enough tough luck for one night."


Cheer up BING
Arthur Blood of the International Club Crosby has
Written to Shane O'Connor at Radio Derby asking
him to play one of your records on your BIRTHDAY

Arthur's postcard amused DJ Shane O'Connor

Holiday Inn was showing at The Picture House, as the local cinema was called, when Arthur became enamoured of our man. Lots of references here to little

local record shops and the market, known only to Derby listeners, where dusted off 78's were added to a growing collection of musical Crosbyana. A lot of us started in this way and to recall long gone cinemas and record shops, in the true sense of the word, is a nostalgia trip that greatly appeals. Many of Radio Derby's listeners must have been hooked immediately and thereafter treated to a potted history of Bing's early years growing up in the 'Tens and 'Twenties and his eventual association with Bob Hope in the early 'Thirties .Fast forward to 1945 and one of four tracks with Xavier Cugat, 'You Belong To My Heart', was Arthur's own selection which served as musical interlude before Arthur described how he came to be in possession of the very tie that Bing wore in the re-make of *Anything Goes* given to him by none other than George O'Reilly, 'the Irish Bernard Delfont'! But more of George later.

Just to prove that the ICC is in fact 'international' Radio Derby went to the trouble of looking on the Crosby Internet and found the ICC's representative in Australia, David Currington. Soon, by 'phone hook up, he, Arthur and Shane were engaged in some Crosby cross talk. Bing was a while getting well known in Australia; probably not until 1932. He would have been even bigger had he been able to make the extended Palladium tour to the Antipodes. Sadly, he died before that was intended to happen. David, who celebrates his enjoyment of Bing every day, had not realised the significance of this particular day but was quick to point out that he had visited the USA for Bing's centenary at Gonzaga University two years ago. A recent local gathering of ten or twelve ICC members argued loudly, as is their wont, about Bing's best films and songs. Arthur confirmed David's views on the ever changing favourite periods of the Crosby career among members and also, which was news to Shane, David's reminder that in 1977 Bing made his very last recordings in the BBC's Maida Vale studios.

Before signing off Shane thanked his guests and offered a box set of Bing CDs to the listener who could say, correctly, why Bing had not been a member of the armed services during WW2. Those paying attention would have heard Arthur's explanation of his colour blindness. There were other considerations, of course, not the least of which would have been his protection and the fact that by 1942 Bing was no longer a young man.

MEMORIES RESURRECTED

On Phoenix Radio, Dublin, Ireland, so named for the famous park there I imagine, George O'Reilly rose to the occasion on a Bing's birthday special presented by host Chris Hitchcock on Sunday, 1st May; an FM 92.5 programme that goes out weekly between 9 and 11 p.m. Asked about his original connection George told the listeners that after a number of letters, etc., had passed between them he sent Bing some shamrock for St. Patrick's Day and received a presentation pack of long playing records, by courier, in return. Bing, he said, was a great correspondent, replying to letters from fans from all over the world whenever he could, often carrying a portable tape recorder around with him so that dictated letters could be sent to the Crosby office and typed out ready to sign when he returned.

Here, again, a vintage record shop and location was mentioned, only this time owned by George himself. It was opened by Nat King Cole at the behest of Bing who wrote to him when he was appearing at the Theatre Royal in Dublin. Through the years that followed Bing wrote to many other artistes asking them to look in on George at his, by now, famous record store.

It was in June 1953 that Bing wrote to George, from Paris, where he had been recording the album Le Bing with Paul Durand and winning a match or two in the French Amateur Golf Championship, saying he would like to meet George at the Savoy Hotel, London on Friday 12th June. London must have been still buzzing with tourists as only ten days previously the Coronation of Queen Elizabeth II had been the main attraction; but with Martin & Lewis and Bing in town London was still the place to be seen.

In the hotel George was approached by Bing who said "You must be George O'Reilly" .

"How did you know?", replied George.

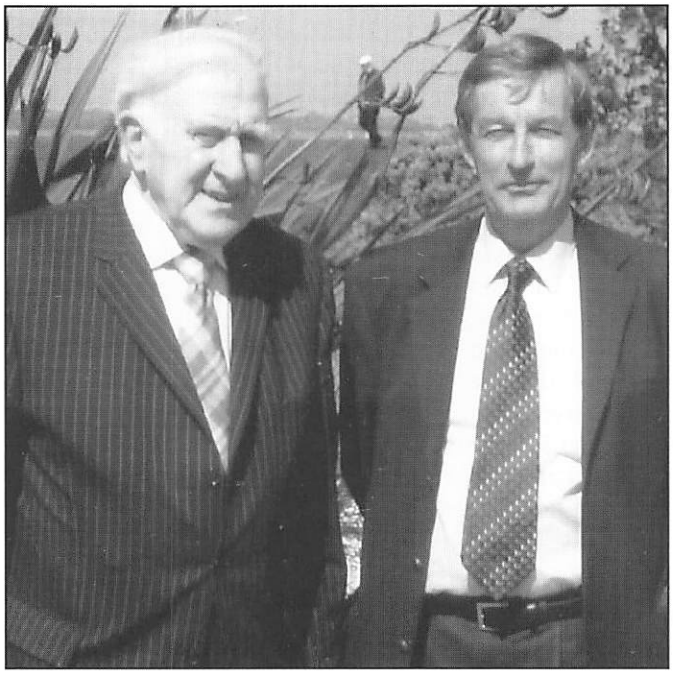
"Well, you look Irish and anyway your initials are on your case!"

So began a great, personal relationship that was, eventually, to result in the production of the television special *A Little Bit Of Irish*. However, we are ahead of ourselves here.

The usual potted history of Bing's beginnings resulted in the first track, 'Mississippi Mud' swiftly followed by what many consider to be Bing's greatest jazz recording, 'St. Louis Blues' with the Duke Ellington Orchestra. Thereafter George launched into the remarkable story of Bing's first visit to Ireland in the autumn of 1961. George had visited Bing and Bob Hope on the set at Shepperton Studios, where they were filming *The Road to Hong Kong* and only a few days after Bing had unexpectedly walked on the stage of the London Palladium in the middle of Bob Hope's performance, causing quite an uproar, George and Bing took the 'plane to Dublin on Friday, 15th September. Problems. The pilot couldn't land. The crowds at Dublin airport had broken through the police cordon spilling on to the runway! Eventually, after circling whilst some semblance of order was established the plane touched down to be greeted by the American Ambassador and a band playing 'Where The Blue Of The Night'. Instead of heading straight for the V.I.P. lounge, as the Ambassador had intended, Bing walked over to the band, spoke to the conductor and asked if they knew any other of his songs. Did they! By the time they got to 'The Bells Of St. Mary's' Bing was affecting to light his pipe, a hankie shielding his face, while wiping away the tears. The motor cavalcade, in which George was seated with his family, Bing, the Ambassador and his wife was something that George will never, ever forget. George had pulled a few strings with the local police chief to the effect that there were twenty-four outriders in the escort. Twelve forward and twelve aft. "How did you arrange this?, asked the Ambassador, "I only ever get two!"

Bing had wanted to meet some genuine Irish artistes and George arranged for this to happen. Major names in the entertainment world who hailed from the Emerald Isle were secretly waiting to greet him as the American

Ambassador's daughter escorted him in to the ballroom.



George O'Reilly (left) with Chris Hitchcock.

On one of his visits George loaned Bing his car, only slightly perturbed that his insurance wouldn't have covered the situation, with Bing in a strange car, in a strange country driving on the opposite side of the road which he would have been used to. Bing was off to visit the home of his housekeeper/nanny, Bridget Brennan, who had asked him to look up her family. [Alan Fisher was not amused that she had even asked Bing.] However, when Bing finally arrived in the village, without mishap, he asked a local bobby where he might find the Brennans. "Which Brennans are you talking about. There are hundreds around here!"

In another break for music we heard Bing and Connee with 'Yes, Indeed!' as an example of how well he worked with other performers, many believing that these recordings were superior to some of his solo work, not because of the 'competition' but simply because Bing enjoyed working with fellow artistes that he respected.

In February 1962 George was invited to visit Bing in his home in Los Angeles where he met Bing's mother. Only very rarely did Bing have house guests so it is the measure of his regard for George that he was honoured in this way. Indeed, Malcolm's *Diary Of A Lifetime* records the fact that President Kennedy stayed at Bing's house in Palm Springs the following month. Over the years that followed, George kept putting the idea to Bing that he should do a special TV show from Ireland. After considerable pressure on the Crosby Office management the show, *A Little Bit Of Irish* finally went into production in September 1966. Bing wrote his own script but George organised the participating artistes. In the opening sequence, performed 'live' on the streets of Dublin, Bing did a little gag when on camera he said "You see that monument to Nelson behind me, well we're hoping to raise enough money here to tear it down and put up a statue to Bob Hope. You may not know Bob Hope but he's a poor, indigent comedian in Hollywood and we'd like to do this for him here in Dublin so we hope you'll be generous with your contributions." Sadly, we never did get to see that little sequence as the director asked Bing to go into Molly Malone. The show was first screened in the USA on 14th March the following year but songs from it were heard in this broadcast interview.

Most members will be aware of the show and many will have seen it and have inferior copies, but the good news is that after thirty-nine years George is in negotiations with an American company who want to bring it out on DVD and VHS for world release.

Bing's associations with Satchmo, Hope and Jolson were discussed, with musical examples to round off one of the best interviews I've heard in some time, and in a letter to Editor Malcolm, Chris Hitchcock said he intended the broadcast to be just one hour but, happily for us, as George was in such good form he just let it run. Apart from being an enjoyable interview to listen to Chris and George will have done great service to the ICC.

THANKS FOR THE MEMORY

Many of our old songs reflect times that are so long past that there can be scarcely anyone who can remember the associations actually taking place. We've had songs about men who mend umbrellas, broken hearts, sharpen knives and, of course, lamplighters. Bing's version of the latter from a wireless broadcast, changes the lyric from lovers to sweethearts: If there were sweethearts in the park, he'd pass a lamp and leave it dark. This more gentile version probably results from complaints received when he first aired the song 'That Old Black Magic' and was heard singing "For you're the lover I have waited for, the mate that fate had me created for." Much tut-tutting in Middle America that a respected family man should utter such a line on a national radio network. Henceforth, lover was taboo and sweetheart substituted whenever the song was reprised.

This caught my attention when 'lamplighter' was played again on Bill and Angela Rennells' programme on BBC Radio Oxford and Radio Berkshire. I always get the feeling that while they often play some unusual or noteworthy material they don't actually know it! Autobiography excerpts with dialogue go by without a mention and that really nice soundtrack version of 'June In January', the rarer, Take –B of 'May I?' and 'It Had To Be You' with the fine Red Nichols accompaniment rate only a mention of the listener requesting the record. 'Brother, Can You Spare A Dime' and 'Walking The Floor Over You' should also rate some sleeve notes, as it were, but Harmony Night doesn't go in for such distracting delving!

Not so with either UK presenters Russell Davies or Paul Barnes. Indeed, their programmes, as well as delivering the songs, do delve into the whys and wherefores of each and every recording. With his frequent page turning of the Crosby catalogue Russell comes up with an enjoyable expansion of the music. For instance, how unusual for Rodgers and Hammerstein, the bards of the West End and Broadway musical, to be composing 'Dear Friend' as a War Loan fund raiser for Bing to perform. Russell took the track from Jonzo Volume 36 wherein John McNicholas's sleeve notes

served Russell well on this 78 rpm loser.

From the same CD he also played the Burke and Van Heusen 1944 take on the title 'Would You' as opposed to that fine waltz tune by Nacio Herb Brown and Arthur Freed which Bing committed to wax in 1936. Among several other tracks Russell also treated us to the very first airing of 'Gone Fishin'' from Ken Barnes' *Swingin' With Bing* album and Bing's blooper on 'Don't Fence Me In' just to prove that the good and famous are just as fallible as the rest of us. And again, how many of us knew, for example, that although Frankie got in first with the release of Bing's *Road To Rio*, Burke-Van Heusen number 'But Beautiful' it was the Crosby version that outsold Mr. Sinatra?

BUT BEAUTIFUL
Lyrics by JOHNNY BURKE · music by JAMES VAN HEUSEN
BING CROSBY · BOB HOPE · DOROTHY LAMOUR
and the ANDREWS SISTERS
"ROAD TO RIO"
A PARAMOUNT RELEASE
JOHN H. TROUP MUSIC HOUSE, INC.
BURKE AND VAN HEUSEN, INC. Music Publishers
1619 BROADWAY, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

DON'T HOOK NOW

The title of a 1944 Crosby short serves as an intro to this part of the column that looks at Barnsey At The Beeb, a presenter who has most of the answers, too, when it comes to crossing the 'T's and dotting the 'I's on his Norwich, Norfolk, UK based three hour farrago of jazz and popular music which has now moved from Sunday evenings to Saturday, 6 to 9 p.m., on 95.1fm in the east of the county or 104.4 in the west. Paul's programme can also be picked up on Medium Wave and on various other points of the dial according to which of the many counties it serves. The headline connection crops up with the Jimmy Van Heusen – Sammy Cahn classic 'Tomorrow's My Lucky Day', arguably the best ever golfing song, a regular on this east of England programme. But attentive readers of this column will know that Barnsey features the ICC calendar songs at the start of the intervening months since you were last here, which includes 'May I?' for March, 'Meet The Sun Halfway' and 'The Pessimistic Character' in April, and 'Children' and 'The Horse Told Me' for May and June respectively. Not being a fan of sopranos it would seem ["can't stand Deanna Durbin" - shame on you Barnsey] the soundtrack version of 'Meet The Sun Halfway' was NOT played. Gloria Jean, you were not welcome!

But a nice added rider to 'May I?' came with a request from our members Doreen and Fred Hubbard for this song from Bing in celebration of their Golden Wedding anniversary on the 5th March. Huge Bing fans, especially young Doreen, they were certainly not among the miserable few who continue to complain that there is far too much of The Groaner on what they see as Paul's Crosby obsessed programme. Happily, Barnsey ignores these ignoramuses and plays whatever is appropriate to the theme of his programmes. And just to prove the "Bing was, is and always will be a jazz singer." he featured 'Shoe Shine Boy', 'Your Socks Don't Match', 'Sweet Georgia Brown' and the very low down bluesy number, of sombre reflection, 'Here Lies Love'. I suppose that 'Sugar, Don't You Know?' by Lee, Bellson & Hayes, which Bing cut with the Count on the Bing 'n' Basie album, sneaks in there somewhere under the broad heading of 'jazz' embracing, as it does, much of the swing era. Although featured on the programme most fans would agree that this was not Bing at his best. Although our supporter presenter is almost always at his best.

Bing on TV in the USA since our last issue:

Robin and the Seven Hoods, March 31, HBO
A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, April 2, Turner Classic Movies (TCM)
Let's Make Love, April 12, Fox Movie Channel
Scared Stiff, April 12, 17, 28, HBO
Stagecoach, April 16, American Movie Classics
The Bells of St. Mary's, April 17, TCM
My Favorite Blonde, April 19, TCM
Road to Morocco, April 22, TCM
Road to Singapore, April 22, TCM
Road to Utopia, April 22, TCM
Road to Zanzibar, April 22, TCM

Robin and the Seven Hoods, April 22, Cinemax
Road to Bali, April 23, TCM
Scared Stiff, April 28, HBO
Going Hollywood, May 2, TCM
A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, May 2, TCM
Man on Fire, May 2, TCM
Going My Way, May 2, TCM
My Favorite Blonde, May 2, TCM
Road to Morocco, May 2, TCM
Road to Singapore, May 2, TCM
Road to Bali, May 2, TCM
Robin and the Seven Hoods, May 3, 23, 29, HBO
Let's Make Love, May 19, Fox Movie Channel
Stagecoach, May 27, American Movie Classics
Ella Fitzgerald: Something to Live For, June 1, PBS
(This portrait of Ella was narrated by Tony Bennett and featured her work with Bing, Frank Sinatra, Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole and Jimmy Durante.)
High Time, (Letterbox), June 3, 13, 30, Fox Movie Channel
Stagecoach, June 11, American Movie Classics
Let's Make Love, June 18, Fox Movie Channel
Road to Morocco, June 18, TCM
Robin and the Seven Hoods, June 19, 22, 27, HBO
The Bells of St. Mary's, June 20, TCM
Robin and the Seven Hoods, June 27, HBO
High Time, (Letterbox), June 30, July 15, Fox Movie Channel
The Bells of St. Mary's, July 7, TCM
Flip Wilson Show with Bing and the Supremes, July 10, TVLand
Let's Make Love, July 12, Fox Movie Channel
Road to Utopia, July 17, TCM
A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court, July 30, TCM

Although not really in the remit of this column it is interesting to report that our Chelmsford member, Margaret Klisky, attended a performance by the Pasadena Roof Orchestra in the town's cathedral. She tells me that she was delighted to hear them give a considerable musical tribute to Bing during their very enjoyable show.

Humble pie corner closes the column this time prompted by a phone call that Malcolm received from member Yvonne Hillard (aged 82) who said I was incorrect in saying that it was Dorothy Squires who recorded 'My Kid's A Crooner' in the Spring issue of the magazine. Quite rightly I also had a very quick and similar response from Wally Oldfield who set up the recording in the first place. The crooning chanteuse was in fact Rosemary Squires as I should know as I have her CD with it on! Goodbye memory, hello senile dementia.

Bert Bishop, June 2005

ONCE IN A WHILE

Personalities associated with Bing who have died since our last issue was prepared include:

Salvador "Tutti" Camarata, a musician, composer and arranger during the big-band era, died on April 13. He was 91. In his diverse career, Camarata arranged music and played trumpet for a wide range of artists, including Bing, Jimmy Dorsey, Ella Fitzgerald, Benny Goodman and Billie Holiday. In the early '30s, he worked as an arranger for saxophonist and bandleader Charlie Barnet before joining the Dorsey band as lead trumpeter. He is credited with arranging the Dorsey hits "Tangerine," "Green Eyes" and "Yours." Dorsey gave him the nickname "Tutti." In the early 1940s, Camarata left Dorsey and was an arranger for Glen Gray and the Casa Loma Orchestra and Goodman's band. During World War II, he served as a flight instructor in the Army Air Forces. Both during and after the war, he worked as musical director for Decca Records and backed Bing on nine occasions between 1944 and 1952 including songs such as "I've Told Every Little Star" and "Just For You". Camarata was also the musical director on Bing's ground-breaking Edsel show in 1957.

Robert Farnon, who scored about forty motion pictures including *Captain Horatio Hornblower R.N.* and *The Road To Hong Kong* and arranged popular songs for top recording artists such as Frank Sinatra and Tony Bennett, died on April 23. He was 87. Farnon came to England in 1944, as a Canadian Army captain, to conduct the Canadian Band of the Allied Expeditionary Forces, which was broadcasting over Armed Forces Radio. He worked alongside Capt. Glenn Miller, who was fronting the U.S. big band, and Sgt. George Melachrino, who was leading the British musicians. At war's end, Farnon decided to remain in England because it offered more film, recording and orchestral opportunities than Canada. He became a resident arranger for Decca Records, and formed the Robert Farnon Orchestra, which broadcast regularly on BBC radio and television. Farnon became friends with Frank Sinatra after working with him in 1962 on the singer's only British album, "Great Songs from Great Britain." Farnon said he enjoyed scoring films because he considered motion pictures more permanent than radio or recordings, and because each film required different music. Among other films he scored was the final "Road" picture, *The Road to Hong Kong,* in 1962. His orchestral score was featured on the Decca soundtrack album released at the time the film was premiered and he provided accompaniment for Bing's vocals.

Ruth Hussey died on April 19. She was 93. From the late 1930's until 1960, Ms. Hussey made dozens of films and appeared with many leading men. She was usually the second female lead in films of the forties and eventually made a greater impact on the Broadway stage, which was where her career began before she was discovered by MGM in 1937. Ruth received an Oscar nomination for best supporting actress for playing Elizabeth Imbrie, the sassy photographer who accompanies James Stewart to cover a socialite's wedding in the 1940 film *The Philadelphia Story.* Her last feature film role was in 1960, as the wife of Bob Hope in *The Facts of Life.* She made two appearances on Bing's *Kraft Music Hall* in 1941 and 1942 and she was fourth billed in *Mr. Music* (1950) when she played Bing's fiancee Lorna Marvis, but she didn't get her man.

Ruth Hussey with Bing in Mr. Music.

June MacCloy is not a name that will immediately be familiar to Bing fans but she was there at the beginning of his film career. Remember the spot in *Reaching For The Moon* when Bing bursts in to sing a snatch of "When The Folks High Up Do The Mean Low Down"? Well, as the scene continues, a tall, pretty blonde with a deep voice sings a few bars too and that was June MacCloy. June died in May at the age of 95. She made a few more films including a number of shorts and her last film was *Go West* (1940) in which she tried to seduce Groucho Marx and sang "You Can't Argue With Love" in the beer hall.

Thurl Ravenscroft is another name which won't mean much until some background is supplied. Thurl was 91 when he died on May 22 and he was perhaps best known to the world as the unmistakable voice of Kellogg's Frosted Flakes mascot Tony the Tiger. In the late 1930s, he appeared on the Kraft Music Hall with Bing, and recorded with him, as part of the Paul Taylor Choristers, a group which eventually became the Sportsmen Quartette. They backed Bing on the two songs from Oklahoma in August 1943 when they called themselves the Sportsmen Glee Club. After military service during World War II, Thurl returned to Hollywood, later joining The Mellomen singing group, and beginning a career in radio, movies, television and commercials. The Mellomen also accompanied Bing on record on several occasions notably "With My Shillelagh under My Arm" in 1951. The Mellomen sometimes joined forces with the Norman Luboff Choir and yes, Thurl was there when they supported Bing on his Christmas Sing in 1955. He was also in the chorus when Bing recorded "Gigi" in 1957. The Mellomen worked with such luminaries as Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Danny Kaye and Rosemary Clooney as well as working for Walt Disney in films, on television, and on records. Mr. Ravenscroft's involvement with Disneyland goes back to opening day in 1955, when he was the announcer for many of the ceremonies and events. His voice has been heard on numerous attractions and rides such as Pirates of the Caribbean, the Haunted Mansion and the Enchanted Tiki Room. His singing career continued into the 1970s and as a member of the Johnny Mann Singers, he sang on 28 albums and appeared on television for three seasons.

Robert F. Slatzer, the notorious co-author of "Bing Crosby - The Hollow Man" and also who wrote two books on Hollywood icon Marilyn Monroe and claimed a brief marriage to her, died on March 28. He was 77. Slatzer also was involved in numerous film and television projects and was director of the 1970 film "Bigfoot."

The Crosby Years

We've already looked at the summer of '75 in this issue and now Gord Atkinson takes us back to the summer of '45.

Although it seems like "yesterday" it was sixty years ago this summer that I first met Bing. I was an 18 year-old Canadian soldier on leave in Hollywood, where he was before the Paramount cameras with Fred Astaire in the 1945 wartime musical, *Blue Skies.*

Twenty-nine years later in the summer of 1974, while in Los Angeles, I met and reminisced back to the 1940s with Bing's friend and famous co-star, the incomparable Fred Astaire. He transcended the status of a legendary star - he was a 20th century phenomenon! Top hat, white tie and tails will for years to come, not only be his trademarks, but the icons of a unique and phenomenal career. He was the embodiment of elegance and sophistication, giving new meaning to the words grace, style and class.

In private life, however, he was a simple, shy man, who was uncomfortable in crowds, and reluctant to talk about his personal life and amazing accomplishments.

One of my most memorable radio interviews took place at his hillside estate in Beverly Hills. Entering his home, I was understandably concerned about my ability to carry on a proper and meaningful conversation with him. To my surprise and consternation, he appeared to be uncomfortable when I turned on my tape recorder. It was a period when he shunned the limelight, and hadn't granted an interview in several years. However, he seemed more at ease when we began to reminisce.

At the time of our meeting I was producing my radio anthology on the life and times of his friend Bing and it took gentle persuasion from Bing's brother, and public relations manager, Larry, before he agreed to the interview. He told me: "Mr. Astaire will meet with you if you agree to discuss only his personal and professional relationship with Bing. He doesn't want to talk about himself."

The Astaire estate was situated on a picturesque hill overlooking Benedict Canyon. His beautiful California style mansion featured an attractive circular foyer. Two of the rooms off the foyer were a sunken living room and a cosy den. Our interview took place in the den, which was laden with an impressive collection of books and record albums, and had a handsome pool table as a centre piece with an adjacent bar. Floor to ceiling windows looked out on a kidney-shaped pool. The view from the den was spectacular - a broad vista of the canyon below.

At the time of our meeting, Fred Astaire was leading a quiet, and I believe, lonely existence. It was the period before he met his second wife Robyn Smith. He had been a widower since 1954, and for several years had led

a very private life. Eventually he returned to the screen as one of the star-hosts of MGM's *That's Entertainment, Parts One and Two*, and for TV assignments as an actor, emcee and "talk show" guest.

Although he was reluctant to dwell on the past, his fond memories of Bing brought forth warm and amusing anecdotes. During the wartime years, while touring the European front lines, they often found themselves in both humorous and dangerous situations. "Once, while a troop convoy was taking a break," he told me, "Bing absent-mindedly went to light up his pipe and was set upon by panicky soldiers who extinguished the pipe and told him he was in the midst of trucks loaded with explosives!"

Bing and Fred in France in WW2.

On one of my visits to the Crosby Hillsborough estate, Bing recalled one of his favourite recollections of that same USO tour. They were billeted for several days in a remote French town, and went unnoticed by the local residents - until one morning at breakfast, a waitress excitedly ran into the mess holding a pre-war movie magazine in her hand with a photo of Astaire and Ginger Rogers on the cover. Bing said, with a chuckle, "Fred was an instant celebrity, and I was practically ignored. He really topped me in that little French town."

On occasion when Astaire was asked by reporters to name his favourite dancing partner, not wishing to offend his leading ladies, he sometimes would reply, "Bing Crosby." It was an answer he gave only half in jest. "We got along very well," he said with affection. "He's a great man, Bing. A very special person and it was a thrill to work with him. We had a lot of laughs together; he is very funny. He used to go out of his way to oblige me and make certain that I was happy with our work. He was in a class all by himself." They last worked together in 1975 when they recorded a wonderful collection of old and new songs for Ken Barnes and then later that year in Bing's Christmas special.

During Hollywood's Golden Age they co-starred at Paramount in two classic musicals, *Holiday Inn* (1942) and *Blue Skies* (1945). In both pictures they did well-remembered song-and-dance routines. Astaire was amused that the casual Bing, who usually shot his musical sequences in one or two takes, rehearsed his steps over and over, and limbered up with exercises and weights for their dance routines, "I'll Capture Your Heart" and "A Couple of Song and Dance Men". On the other hand, Astaire, who was a perfectionist, rehearsed every musical scene until it was flawless. Bing told me that for one routine in "Holiday Inn", the famous firecracker dance, "Astaire did twenty-two takes. To me the last one looked similar to the first, but not to Fred who saw something that he felt wasn't right in each successive take."

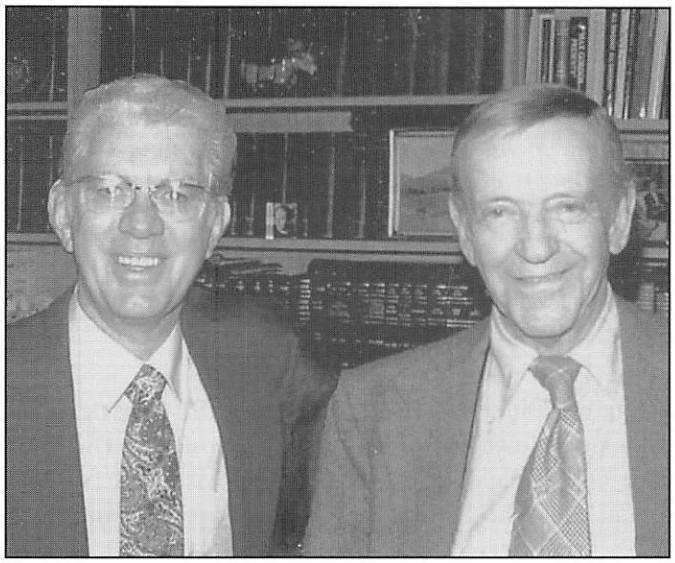
The firecracker dance was done with small explosives called torpedoes that discharge when thrown against something hard. It was a spectacular scene in the movie and an Astaire classic. "That was a favourite of mine too," he told me. "It took a great deal of preparation. I had real torpedo firecrackers in my pockets and I threw a lot of them during the rehearsals. The cameras had to be close to the ground and when I began throwing them on the floor and they burst, the men working the lights and cameras were being sprayed by the sand in the explosive. They called out to stop the action and wipe their faces clean. They were then given big goggles for protection for their eyes. But it was a kind of kick to hear the torpedoes explode on the beat of the music. It was really a complicated and very tricky dance to stage."

At the conclusion of the interview I asked him if someone could order me a taxi. To my surprise he replied, "I don't think you can get a cab up here. But I could drive you down to the Beverly Hills Hotel and you could get one there." The thought of driving through Beverly Hills with the inimitable star as my chauffeur set my mind in mad motion, wondering if I could somehow alert the media, and have this fantasy event filmed for posterity - or at least for home town coverage. My spirits were quickly subdued when he thought for a moment and added, "I'll check with the girls." Obviously his staff had occasions to order taxis.

Returning from the kitchen to the den (which he did with the same graceful steps that he always displayed on the screen) he told me that a cab had been ordered, but it would take some time for it to arrive and invited me to join him for a drink in his lovely sunken living-room. We had a very pleasant conversation about current affairs, his trips to Canada and his admiration of the then Canadian Prime Minister, Pierre Trudeau.

Fred Astaire was as charming and gracious in person as he had been in his well-remembered films.

When my taxi arrived at the Astaire estate, the cabby was stunned to be met at the door by the legendary star,



Gord & Fred

who asked him to wait a moment while we finished our discussion. The speechless driver did a double, and then a triple take, as he looked on in amazement while we concluded our conversation and my famous host bid me farewell.

As I entered the cab the "star-struck" driver finally found his voice, but could only say one thing: "Fred Astaire! What a guy! Has he got class!" A statement that he kept repeating over and over. When he dropped me off on Hollywood Boulevard, to browse through the cinema book stores, I left him with his own words. With just a touch of humour, and a great deal of sincerity I said to him: 'Fred Astaire! What a guy! Has he got class!'

Gord Atkinson

(Editor: This excerpt from Gord Atkinson's autobiography is published courtesy of the publisher, Creative Bound Inc.)

Keeping Track

***Ken Crossland** looks at the new releases.*

COMPACT DISCS

Well as Bing seems to become more and more the Christmas singer, summertime becomes the season when new releases seem fewest and farthest between. But, if quality rather than quantity is what you are looking for, you need go no further than the two latest releases in the marvellous Chronological series. Volumes 38 and 39 have now been issued, taking the complete Crosby recordings now available on CD to August 1945. Details are as follows:

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 38 Jonzo JZCD-38 UK £10.60

1. I Promise You 2. I Love You 3. These Foolish Things 4. I'd Rather Be Me 5. Just One Of Those Things 6. All Of My Life * 7. You Belong To My Heart (reject) 8. Siboney 9. Baia 10. Hasta Manana 11. You Belong To My Heart (A) 12. Why Do I Like You? 13. Temptation 14. Close As Pages In a Book (reject) * 15. Early American * 16. Connecticut (A) (with Judy Garland) 17. Connecticut (B) (with Judy Garland) 18. Yah-Ta-Ta, Yah-Ta-Ta (A) (with Judy Garland) 19. Yah-Ta-Ta, Yah-Ta-Ta (B) (with Judy Garland) * 20. Yah-Ta-Ta, Yah-Ta-Ta (T) (with Judy Garland) 21. If I Loved You * 22. Close As Pages In a Book (A) 23. I Love You Truly * 24. Just A-Wearyin' For You*

* = new to CD

Bing rehearses 'Baby, Won't You Please Come Home' with Eddie Heywood

The Chronological Bing Crosby Volume 39 Jonzo JZCD-39 UK £10.60

1. Home Sweet Home (L3815) * 2. Ave Maria (L3816) * 3. Along The Navajo Trail (with The Andrews Sisters) l 4. Good, Good, Good (with The Andrews Sisters) 5. Happy, Happy, Happy Wedding Day (A) (with The Andrews Sisters) 6. Happy, Happy, Happy Wedding Day (B) (with The Andrews Sisters) * 7. Betsy (A) (with The Andrews Sisters) 8. Betsy (B) (with The Andrews Sisters) * 9. It's Been A Long Long Time 10. Whose Dream Are You? (A) 11. Whose Dream Are You? (C) * 12. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral (L3895-A) 13. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral (L3895-?) * 14. The Rose Of Tralee 15. Where The Blue Of The Night 16. I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen (A) 17. I'll Take You Home Again, Kathleen (B) * 18. Home Sweet Home (L3902-A) * 19. Ave Maria (L3903-A) 20. I Can't Begin To Tell You (A) 21. I Can't Begin To Tell You (B) * 22. I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me 23. Save Your Sorrow For Tomorrow 24. Baby, Won't You Please

Come Home 25. That Little Dream Got Nowhere

* = new to CD

These 49 titles of course follow the chronological pattern that gives the series its name, but if ever two CDs presented the range and breadth of Bing the singer, it must be these. South American and Irish songs, mid 19th century songs, nonsense songs, Bing with The Andrews gals, Bing with Judy Garland, Bing's theme song ... the list goes on and they all represented here. Sound quality is good, with many of the masters coming from test pressings, which are as close as you can get to the original source recordings. Highly recommended. Available from Jonzo Records, PO Box 212, Harrow, Middlesex HA3 7LD, UK.

Many more of Bing's Irish songs can be found on ....

Bing Sings Irish **Kala** **USA** **$6.99**

1. Danny Boy 2. Dear Old Donegal 3. I'll Take You Home Again Kathleen 4. Rose of Tralee 5. St. Patrick's Day Parade 6. When Irish Eyes Are Smiling 7. Where the River Shannon Flows 8. Too-Ra-Loo-Ra-Loo-Ral 9. Did Your Mother Come from Ireland? 10. Galway Bay 11. It's the Same Old Shillelagh 12. My Girl's an Irish Girl 13. That Tumbledown Shack in Athlone 14. Two Shillelagh O'Sullivan 15. Who Threw the Overalls in Mrs. Murphy's Chowder? 16. The Donovans 17. Isle of Innisfree 18. Eileen 19. Tobermory Bay 20. With My Shillelagh Under My Arm

Familiar titles all of which have been on CD before, including the non-Irish too – and of course you all know which one that is, don't you? (answer at the end for anyone who doesn't).

America's Favorite Entertainer **American Legends** **USA** **$7.99**

1. Swinging On A Star 2. You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby 3. Dinah 4. Temptation 5. Too Marvelous for Words 6. I'm An Old Cowhand (From the Rio Grande) 7. Trade Winds 8. Sierra Sue 9. Don't Fence Me In 10. Shoo Shoo Baby

This 10-track bargain basement presentation wins the prize for the most encouraging title seen this summer, although content is all largely familiar commercial material, with the exception of "Shoo Shoo Baby" which is from Kraft radio.

Ken Barnes "Swingin' With Bing" set is unquestionably one of the best things to come our way in many a year. The first piece of good news is that UK readers can now obtain it at much more sensible prices – internet sources have it at around £30 and Ray Purslow of the Record Centre (Birmingham) tells me that the album is also being handled by a British distributor and it will retail at £35.

Secondly, Sepia in the UK will release the "missing" fourth CD – Bing and Al Jolson – as a double CD release in September, retailing at £10.99. The release will include a 16-page booklet, and will be presented to the same style and standard as the original set. I see from their publicity that Sepia Records (http://www.sepiarecords.com/) was formed in June 2002 to release CDs at an affordable price to be enjoyed by all. Their CDs feature quality music of yesteryear, most of which has been neglected and/or almost forgotten and they hope that by doing so they will preserve great recordings from a different era for the generations of tomorrow. They have an extensive catalogue already and this is their first double album. Here are the tracks.

Bing Crosby meets Al Jolson
The Complete Collection **Sepia** **UK** **£10.99**
CD1 - April Showers

1. April Showers 2. When The Red, Red Robin Comes Bob-Bob-Bobbin' Along 3. Back In Your Own Backyard 4. You Made Me Love You 5. Waitin' For The Robert E. Lee 6. I've Got The Sun In The Morning (Bing, solo) 7. Early days - The young Crosby seeks advice from a Star (*featuring* Always) 8. Ma Blushin' Rosie 9. Chat 10. Swanee (Al, solo) 11. Chat 12. Philco Commercial - "Goof" 13. A Rainy Night In Rio (Bing, solo) 14. Chat 15. The One I Love Belongs To Somebody Else 16. What Am I Gonna Do About You? (Bing, solo) 17. Chat 18 Let Me Sing And I'm Happy (Al Jolson, solo) 19. Chat 20. Rockabye Your Baby With A Dixie Melody (Al, solo) 21. Chat 22. Who Paid The Rent For Mrs. Rip Van Winkle? 23. 2nd Philco Commercial 24. The Anniversary Song 25. Announcement 26. A Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight (with John Charles Thomas) 27. Oh, Susanna (with John Charles Thomas) 28. In The Evening By The Moonlight / Hear Dem Bells 29. Beautiful Dreamer (Bing, solo) 30. The Banks Of The Wabash 31. Chat 32. Alabamy Bound (with John Charles Thomas) 33. I Can Dream, Can't I? (Bing, solo) 34. Toot, Toot, Tootsie (Al Jolson, solo) 35. Chat 36. I Only Have Eyes For You 37. Waitin' For The Robert E. Lee 38. Bing introduces Irving Berlin 39. Oh, How I Hate To Get Up In The Morning (Irving Berlin) 40. Chat 41. Lazy (Al Jolson, solo) 42. Chat 43. Getting Nowhere (Bing, solo) 44. All By Myself 45. Alexander's Ragtime Band 46. Easter Parade 47. Goodnight chat

CD2 - Happy Times

1. Bye Bye Baby (Bing, solo) 2. Bing introduces Jolson 3. Is It True What They Say About Dixie? (Al, solo) 4. Chat 5. Carolina In The Morning 6. My Blue Heaven 7. Alabamy Bound 8. Kate (Bing, solo) 9. Ma Blushin' Rosie 10. Chat 11. Sunbonnet Sue 12. Chat 13. A Pretty Girl Is Like A Melody 14. The Best Things In Life Are Free 15. Back In Your Own Backyard 16. Baby Face 17. The One I Love Belongs To Somebody Else 18. All By Myself 19. Chat.

THE AL JOLSON SHOW - with guest star BING CROSBY (extracts from Kraft Music Hall shows, October 16, 1947 and January 15, 1948)

Intro. April Showers 2. For Me And My Gal (Al, solo) 3. Chat with Oscar Levant 4. Peg O' My Heart (Al, solo) 5. Chat with Bing 6. The Whiffenpoof Song (Bing, solo) 7. Chat 8. Carolina In The Morning 9. Chat 10. Beautiful Dreamer 11. Chat 12. Gershwin Medley *(Rhapsody In Blue (Oscar Levant - piano) - Swanee (Bing) - The Man I Love (Al) - Lady Be Good (Bing) - Somebody Loves Me (Al) - Embraceable You (Bing) - I Got Rhythm (Al) - It Ain't Necessarily So (Bing) - Concerto In F (Oscar Levant - piano) - Summertime (Al) - Strike Up The Band*

THE BING CROSBY SHOW - recorded on February 2, 1950 in San Francisco, broadcast February 15, 1950

Happy Times (Bing, solo) 2. Chat 3. California, Here I Come (Al, solo) 4. Chat 5. Yaaka Hula Hickey Dula 6. Chat 7. Whispering 8. Chat 9. Bye Bye Baby 10. Chat 11. Waitin' For The Robert E. Lee

THE FINAL SHOW - recorded in NEW YORK, April 10, 1950, broadcast May 3, 1950.

1. Bing introduces Jolson 2. Give My Regards To Broadway (Al, solo) 3. Chat 4. Ma Blushin' Rosie 5. Chat 6. Avalon 7. Chat 8. Lullaby Of Broadway 9. Chat 10. My Old Kentucky Home

It may be a little early to give outline details of this next issue but it will probably be out before our winter magazine reaches you so this will give you chance to look out for it later in the year. It's going to be a winner.

BING: A Musical Autobiography **Avid** **UK** **c. £15.99**

4-CD set containing Bing's musical autobiography set from 1954 plus many extras.

CD1 - 'Muddy Water' through to 'I've Got A Pocketful of Dreams'

CD2 - 'Small Fry' to 'The Bells of St. Mary's'

CD3 - 'Put It There, Pal' to 'Y'All Come' plus "Paris Honeymoon" medley from Kraft Music Hall (June 28, 1945) and "The Star Maker" medley from the Kraft show of April 19, 1945.

CD4 - Soundtrack songs from all of Bing's Mack Sennett shorts, 2 Publicity discs for *The Big Broadcast,* soundtrack songs from the Paramount short *Please*, Soundtrack songs from *She Loves Me Not*, *Two For Tonight* publicity disc, *Dr. Rhythm* radio preview, Publicity disc for *Birth of the Blues*, 'Here Lies Love' (from another publicity disc for *The Big Broadcast*)

The CDs have been mastered by Dave Bennett and the sleeve notes are by Malcolm Macfarlane. Avid have of course released Bing material in the past and they have a web site at http://www.avidgroup.co.uk/acatalog/index.html

DVD

The Edsel Show – Starring Bing Crosby **Quantum Leap** **UK** **£11.99**

The Ford Edsel car was the most famous white elephant in the history of the Ford Motor Company, not even a TV show featuring Bing, Sinatra, Louis Armstrong and Rosemary Clooney could save it! But, the good news is that the show was good – the highlight for me being the reprise of "Now You Has Jazz" by Bing and Louis just a year or so after they performed it in *High Society*. The show has been around in other formats for a while, and bits of it have turned up on other commercial compilations.

Bing Crosby – The Still Of The Night **Waterfall Home Entertainment** **UK** **£9.99**

Details are sketchy about this UK Region 2 release which is described by Waterfall as DVD, booklet and CD "featuring a biography of the Harry Lillis Crosby who became Bing Crosby and went on to have thirty-eight number one hits. Also the film 'Road To Bali' which finds two music hall artists on the run from Australia and a shotgun wedding." Running time is 55 minutes.

High Hopes – The Frank Sinatra Show **Quantum Leap** **UK** **£11.99**

This is the Timex TV show from October 19, 1959, which apart from the musical content, has also been interesting to me because of the chemistry between Sinatra and Bing that is evident – Sinatra all energy and wannabee, Bing relaxed and confident and seemingly the main man. Perhaps the Sinatra Society would take a different view! All in all a good show, and two good Sinatra/Martin/Crosby items but no Bing solo.

A couple more of Bing's films have also had a UK Region 2 release – *Going My Way* is available from Universal, whilst *The Country Girl* has a Paramount release. Both should be available from regular outlets at around £12.

Andy Williams – Moon River And Me **Demon Vision** **UK** **£13.99**

This double DVD release features a 90-minute documentary on the career of Andy Williams, with the second DVD giving us Andy's favourite duets. These include a four song medley with Bing from October 1966 – "Don't Fence Me In / I'm An Old Cowhand / In The Cool, Cool, Cool Of The Evening/ When You And I Were Young Maggie Blues" – and presented in beautiful colour.

I write this review having just seen 77 year-old Andy on his UK 2005 tour, for which the programme makes reference to Andy's first record in 1944, backing Bing on "Swinging On A Star". Andy's voice has thinned a lot, but like the similarly-aged Tony Bennett, the premier league professionalism remains. US readers can obtain this from http://www.lslproductions.com where some other interesting TV variety DVDs can be found.

Astaire & Rogers Collection, Vol. 1 **Warner Home Video** **USA (Region 1) $59**

(Top Hat / Swing Time / Follow the Fleet / Shall We Dance / The Barkleys of Broadway)

Due to be released on August 16, the DVD set features several classic Astaire & Rogers films with some interesting extras including a classic cartoon called *Bingo Crosbyana*. The story in this cartoon concerns various insects which have taken over a kitchen. After some playing with the food, one bug croons like Bing, then does some very showy flying which gets him all the girls. A spider drops down, and he runs in fear, leaving his girlfriend vulnerable. The other bugs manage to get the spider, eventually trapping it on flypaper. The caricature of Bing, who proves himself a craven coward when faced with the spider, apparently produced a lawsuit for defamation against Warner Brothers from Crosby.

Andy & Bing harmonise together in 1966.

WHAT'S ON THE WEB?

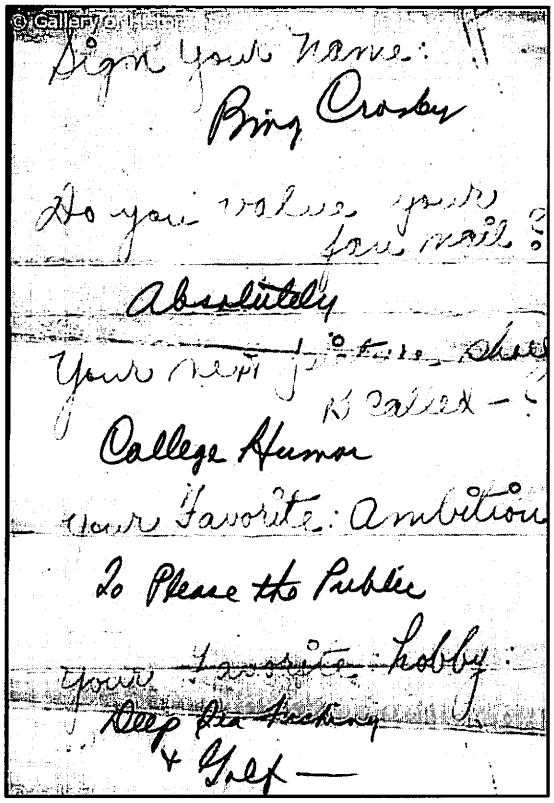
My thanks to Brian Kindness of New South Wales, Australia for clearing up the mystery of "Way Back Home" (BING #138). Here's the explanation.

"Ken - re your reference to the Decca record "Way Back Home" - this was in fact issued as the DECCA ALL-STAR REVIEW on Decca No.473 (U.S.) - recording date 20/5/1935. It was also released in Australia on Decca Y-5004. Part 1 features Bob Crosby, not Bing. Other artists are Johnny "Scat" Davis, Ella Logan, and the Tune Twisters with the Victor Young Orch. Part 2 continues with "Way Back Home" featuring the aforementioned artists, plus Cleo Brown piano and vocal - minus Bob Crosby."

A few months back, one of our members, Maurice Beardmore of Derby, kindly loaned me some reel to reel tapes, ostensibly for their Michael Holliday content. I soon discovered that Maurice had been a diligent taper of the "Perry Como Show" when it was aired in the UK by BBC in the late Fifties. When Como changed his sponsor to Kraft in 1959, he became the latest occupant of the Kraft Music Hall and celebrated that fact in his first show for Kraft with a tribute to his predecessors. Bing loomed large of course and what followed was a very appropriate "duet" between

Bing and Perry, featuring Bing singing "Somebody Else Is Taking My Place", from a KMH broadcast in 1942, with Perry adding a postscript – "Nobody Is Taking Your Place!" Maurice's reel tape is audio only so if anyone knows where we might find film footage, I'm all ears. Bing never recorded the song commercially, but was still featured on the sheet music, which turned up lately on eBay.

The most unusual and expensive item relating to Bing on eBay however was probably that offered by The Gallery of History in Las Vegas for an initial price of $475 with the estimated sale price being between $600 and $1200. It was a questionnaire signed: "Bing Crosby", in pencil on the back of an unsigned photo, 4 3/4 x 6 3/4, of actor Wallace Reid. On a handwritten note asking a series of questions, Bing has pencilled the following answers. [Do you value your fan mail?] "Absolutely". [Your next picture shall be called?] "College Humor". [your Favorite Ambition:] "To Please the Public". [Your Favorite hobby:] "Deep Sea Fishing & Golf -". The auction took place on July 3 and it appears that no bids were received.



And finally, if anyone is still scratching their head about the non-Irish song in the "Sings Irish" collection, the answer is Tobermory Bay, which is actually in Scotland (which I recently had to explain to one visitor to the UK, isn't an island either!).

Ken Crossland http://www.kencrossland.co.uk

Announcement

THE INTERNATIONAL CLUB CROSBY - UK Branch

40th ANNUAL DINNER / MEETING

Weetwood Hall, Conference Centre & Hotel
Otley Road, Leeds, West Yorkshire. LS16 5PS
Telephone: 0113 230 6000
Website: www.weetwood.co.uk

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 2nd., 2005, 3pm - 10pm

A cordial and warm invitation is extended to all members, their partners and friends to attend our forthcoming dinner / meeting. This is the 40th. annual dinner held in Leeds to celebrate Bing's life and times, so please make the effort to come along for this special event and obtain your annual Crosbyana injection! Bing's niece, Carolyn Schneider will be our star speaker and we shall also have some interesting DVD material for you to see. As those who attended last year will know, we have excellent facilities at Weetwood Hall for showing DVDs and playing music.

A three-course Carvery Dinner will be provided. Please book by sending a cheque for £23 per person (£20 for the meal, £3 for room-hire expenses) to Michael Crampton. Y'All Come! You will be amongst friends.

AUSTRALIAN CHART BOOK 1940-1969

Compiled by David Kent and published in 2005, this book is the result of many years of historical research into the most popular songs and records of this thirty year period in Australia. It is based on charts specially compiled for this publication, from hit parades, radio charts and best sellers lists. Available in soft cover only. 271 pages. ISBN 0-646-44439-5. Cost: Aus$95.00, including postage, within Australia. (Additional postage costs for international orders).

John Wall of Melbourne sent us a cutting from the Herald Sun of June 30 which looked at the combined results revealed by this book and its earlier companion *Australian Chart Book 1970-1992*. The statistics are very interesting and it seems that 629 artists have hit No. 1 in Australia since January 1940 through to 1992. The most prolific are:

Bing Crosby (27) - The Beatles (26) - Joe Loss (14)
Perry Como (14) - Elvis Presley (14) - Frank Sinatra (11)
-The Andrews Sisters (11) - Nat King Cole (10)

There have been 83 Aussie artists who have reached the No. 1 spot and the first one was Darryl Stewart with his biblical themed song "A Man Called Peter" in 1955.

Great to see Bing's achievements recognised in this way.

LIVE8

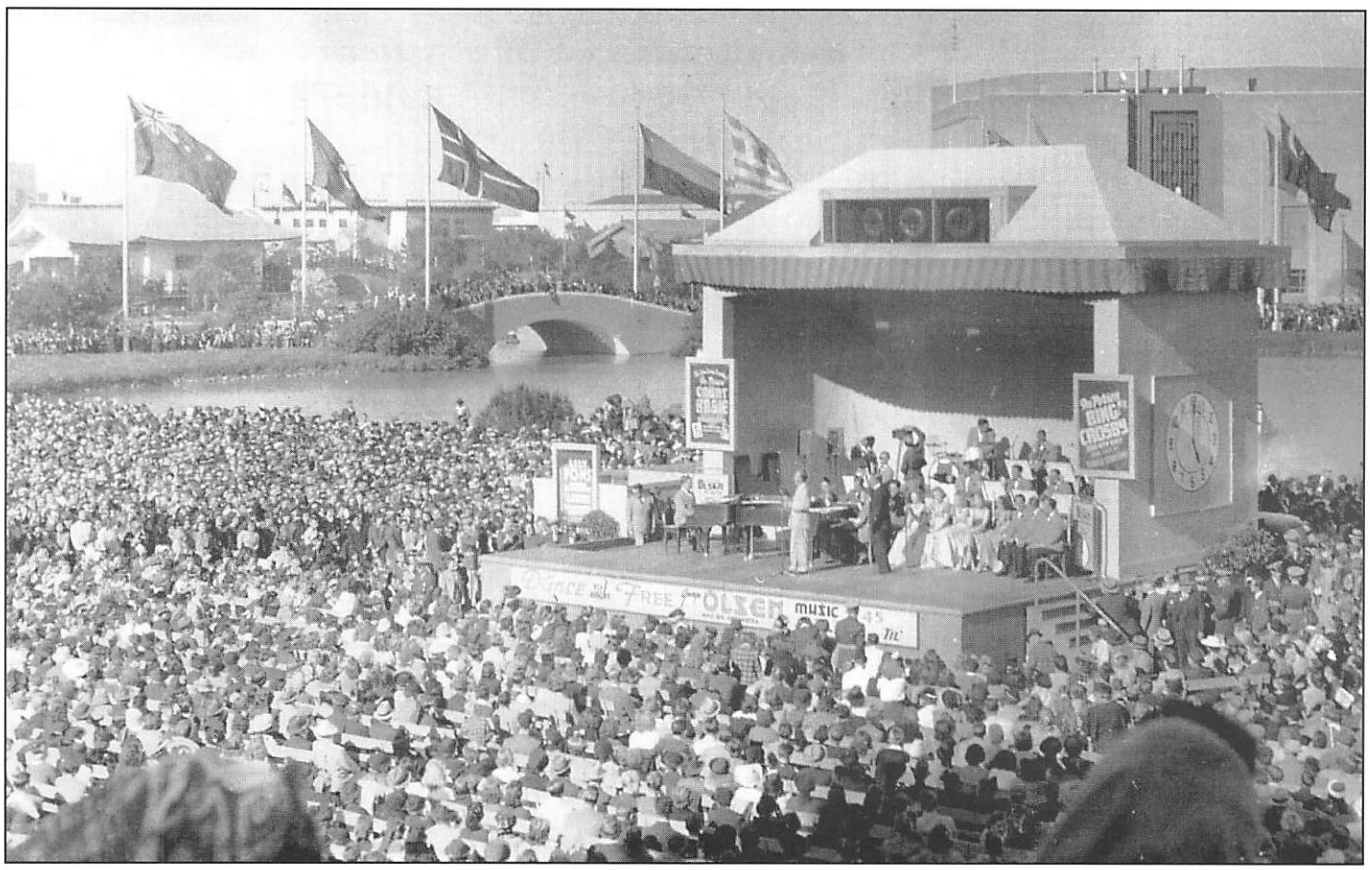
The Live 8 concerts in July were a wonderful spectacle but they did remind your Editor just how completely out of touch he is with today's rock, pop and soul (and that of 20 to 30 years ago come to think of it!). However, entertainers performing in front of huge crowds in the open air are nothing new. Back on Sunday, October 8, 1939, Bing helped to attract the largest attendance (187,730) at the Golden Gate International Exposition on Treasure Island, San Francisco. He sang with George Olsen and his band in two free shows during the afternoon. The crowds were so vast that Bing was unable to reach the island by road and he had to be taken there by yacht. His songs included "Mexicali Rose" and "Deep Purple." The photo below captures the scale of the event. Bing can be seen in a light coloured suit at the microphone on the stage.

The Melody Lingers On - The Songs Of Irving Berlin

Our President, Kathryn Crosby, appeared in a musical production at the El Portal Theatre, North Hollywood recently and here's an extract from a review in *U-Daily News*.

Steppin' out in style

Thursday, June 30, 2005 - Upon first hearing the music to Irving Berlin's "White Christmas," Bing Crosby is reported to have uttered the phrase, "This one will do just fine." We have this from the crooner's widow, Kathryn Crosby, who elegantly takes on



narrative duties in "The Melody Lingers On," the revue of some three dozen Berlin songs at the El Portal Theatre.

"White Christmas," to no one's surprise, is among them. Kathryn Crosby introduces and sings part of "White Christmas" before she's joined in duet by Todd Murray, who plays the Berlin persona in "Melody." And that song - with thanks to Mr. C. - does just fine. As does "Melody." Fine as in wine. Or china.

It's a crackerjack of a songbook that musical supervisor Edward Sayegh and music director Colin Freeman are playing with here. The cast, directed and choreographed by Jamie Rocco, is stellar. Combine Crosby's presence with David Engel's fancy footwork and the lovely voices of Christine Saffran Ashford and Melina Marie Kalomas, and you're pretty well-stocked. The entire ensemble, in fact, is composed of legitimate song-and-dance double threats. Rocco and dance captain Aimee Mauzey put them on vibrant display.

. . . The song-bridging dialogue is taken from Berlin's biography, written by his daughter, Mary Ellin Barrett. Apart from giving Crosby a defined function in "Melody" (she has the fewest songs), the dialogue and biographical snippets don't serve much of a function. We learn of some of Berlin's early struggles (including the death of his first wife and infant son) and that he hit a funk at age 40. By the second act, which showcases much of Berlin's movie and Broadway work, the storytelling and contextualizing of songs have fallen largely by the wayside.

Fred Astaire puts in an appearance (via the nimble-footed Engel leading "Steppin' Out With My Baby"). Followed by Ethel Merman (Fiama Franco) toning down the brashness with selections from "Call Me Madam" and "Annie Get Your Gun." . . .Whether wearing tails, musical-theater wear or puttin' on the ritz (yes, that song's in there, too), the players look smart (costumes are by Sharell L. Martin) and move gracefully. Sayegh, Freeman and original arranger/orchestrator Donald Johnston make sure they sound great. With an able assist - of course - from one Irving Berlin. Long may his music linger.

Evan Henerson

The Bing Crosby Movie Page

In our last issue, we gave details of a website maintained by Wayne Schmidt of Southern California and since then Mr. Schmidt has been busy looking at Bing's film career on a new page at:

http://www.waynesthisandthat.com/crosbymovies.html

He has given us permission to reproduce the page here.

A comparison of box office grosses for Bing Crosby's top selling movies to the top movies of the 2000s after correction for inflation and population changes.

A useful measure of a star's popularity is the total money he took in at the box office. The more people like him, the more they will pay to go see his movies. The problem with using box office grosses to compare stars from different eras is that inflation changes the relative value of the box office gross. For example: if raw box office receipts are compared, *Titanic* earned more money than *Gone with the Wind.* But, after factoring in the effect of inflation over the 60-odd years between these two movies it turns out that *Gone with the Wind* actually earned more money. While this sounds reasonable and is done quite often to compare movies and stars from different eras, it's only half the story.

While calculating the total box office revenues for Bing Crosby and Elvis Presley's movies to compare their popularity, it occurred to me that inflation wasn't the only factor effecting the box office grosses. Population also has to be considered.

Box office gross receipts are like the Neilson rating in television: they're a measure of a movie or star's popularity, popularity in this case being considered as the fraction of the total population willing to pay to see that particular movie or star. To fairly compare movie grosses across time, the grosses of the earlier movies have to be increased to adjust for the higher population of the newer movie.

Here's an analogy: Let's say you have two different movies playing in two different towns. Town "A" has 100 people, town "B" has 1,000 people. Let's also say that 50 of the people in "A" saw their movie whereas 250 people in "B" saw theirs. If some executive in New York saw these raw numbers without making an adjustment for the populations, he'd be forced to assume that the movie in town "B" was more popular than the one in town "A." However, if the population of "A" is mathematically brought up to the same as town "B," then by proportion the movie in "A" would have been seen by 500 people and would therefore be the more popular movie. In addition, if town "A" saw it's movie in 1940 and "B" in 2005 and we wanted to compare box offices grosses as a measure of popularity, then a second correction factor for inflation also has to be factored in.

That's what this page is going to attempt to do: correct Bing Crosby's and Elvis Presley's movie box office grosses for both inflation and population influences to 2005 values so that their movie popularities can be compared.

In calculating inflation effects for a specific item, it isn't good enough to use the cost of living index because it represents an average of several hundred consumer goods and services; the inflation factor for the specific item has to be determined. Fortunately, www.natoonline.org lists how average U.S. movie ticket prices have changed over the years. For example; in 2005 the average ticket cost $6.39. In 1940, the same

ticket cost only $0.30. By dividing the cost of the ticket in 2005 by the cost in 1940, we obtain the factor by which gross ticket sales in 1940 have to be multiplied by to correct for inflation. Once this number is calculated, then it needs to be multiplied by the ratio of the population in 2005 divided by the population in 1940 to correct for the increase in population.

(Note: this is not double counting, population and inflation effects are completely separate. For example: suppose the population of the U.S. had remained constant, inflation would still have to be corrected for. If inflation had been held to 0, but the population grew, then the gross would still have to be corrected for it for fair comparisons.)

Here are some example ticket prices and population numbers:

Date	average ticket price	population
1940	$0.30	132 million
1955	$0.54	167 million
1974	$1.89	213 million
2005	$6.39	296 million

Using the extensive tables and charts from which these numbers were taken, correction factors for box office grosses from any year can be formulated that compensate for both inflation and population. Applying these to Bing Crosby and Elvis Presley's movie grosses (from www.the-numbers.com) provides the following totals:

Decade	total box office	Adjusted to 2005
Bing Crosby:		
1930s	$3.0 million	$143 million
1940s	$75.0 million	$2,991 million
1950s	$73.0 million	$1,529 million
1970s	$19.0 million	$89 million
Total		$4,752 million

Elvis Presley:

Based on decade centered on 1964 ..... $67.0 million ..... $708 million

What these adjusted numbers imply is that in his time, as a movie star Bing Crosby was 6.7 times more popular than Elvis Presley was in his. This is easy to understand because Bing Crosby had three movies that were the top money makers the years they were released and many of his other films were in the top ten for their years. The highest-earning movie Elvis ever had was *Viva Las Vegas*, which only made it to 11th place.

To get a better appreciation for how popular Bing Crosby was as a star, consider the following specific movies and how they compare to the box office receipts of recent blockbusters.

Movie	box office	Adjusted to 2005
Going My Way (1944)	$17 million	$695 million
Bells of St. Mary's (1945)	$21 million	$837 million
Welcome Stranger (1947)	$15 million	$510 million
White Christmas (1954)	$26 million	$572 million
Harry Potter, Sorcerer's Stone (2001)	$318M	$375 million
Lord of the Rings, Return of the King (2003)	$377M	$407 million
Shrek II (2004)	$436 M	$453 million
Star Wars III (2005)	$396M	$396 million

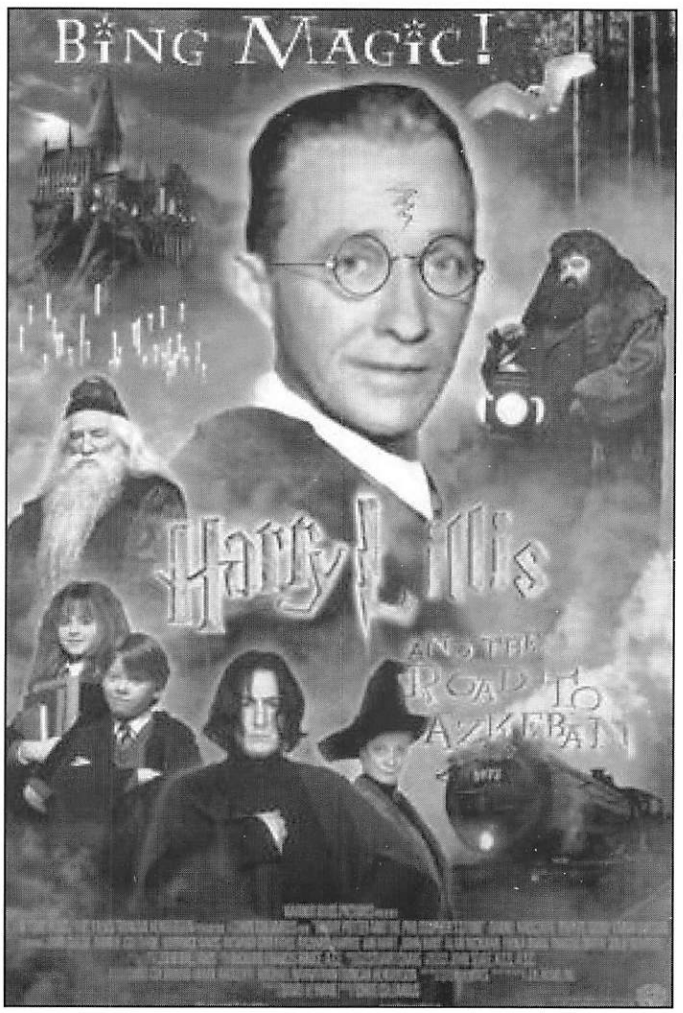
These numbers provide perspective on just how popular a star Bing Crosby was in his era. When combined with his unbelievable success in the music world, it must be conceded that he is arguably the most popular entertainer of any era. Sadly, because styles have changed he has faded from the public consciousness. Generations are being born who will never know of him or his accomplishments. We may truly never witness his kind of greatness again.

Wayne Schmidt

(Editor: Great stuff, Wayne! I suggested to Wayne that using population figures may not be truly accurate as a lot more people used to go to the cinema in Bing's time. Wayne has therefore carried out further research and for instance, in 1946, the tickets purchased per annum per head of population was 34. In 1960, this had dropped to only 7 tickets per person per annum. Further details can be seen at Wayne's page at:

http://www.waynesthisandthat.com/moviedata.html

Wayne mentioned a Harry Potter film and here's a great spoof poster put together by Steven Lewis of the Bing Crosby Internet Museum some time ago.)



Bing Crosby
Hollywood

Hillsborough
January 30, 1965

Dear Jim:

I told you on the set, but I wanted to put it in writing - in all my experience, Jim, I've never worked with a nicer fella than you, or a fella more qualified in your job.

Your patience is inexhaustible. I can't recall any time on the set where you ever exhibited any signs of falling apart, blowing up, or taking a walk - and you had many situations where such behavior would have been justifiable. Tremendous control, old boy!

I had a great time just because of the fact that you were at the helm, and in spite of my bursitis problems.

I do hope we can get together on a film sometime -any one of the projects we discussed should be definite possibilities.

As far as the series is concerned, I don't think we made a single episode that we have to be ashamed of or worried about. I just got into that type of thing about five or six years too late.

With all this wild semi-pornographic type of thing that audiences are viewing nowadays, it's not conceivable they're going to have much of an appetite for our gentle, casual stories.

The way the trend is going it's conceivable that Norman Mailer and Tennessee Williams and fellas of that stamp will soon be doing all the writing.

Well, in any case, we closed on a high point - with Pamela Curran on the set, didn't we?

Hope to see you, Jim, either in Hew York or on the Coast -

Always your friend,

Bing Crosby

Screen Romances

JULY
25c

12 Outstanding hits include

Leslie Howard in "OF HUMAN BONDAGE"... John Barrymore in "TWENTIETH CENTURY"... Sylvia Sidney in "THIRTY-DAY PRINCESS"... and other stories

Also in this issue . . .
Bing Crosby and Carole Lombard in "WE'RE NOT DRESSING!"

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